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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

## Palawan underground river still in 7 'wonder' race

THE PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRANEAN River National Park, one of the country's top natural attractions and recognized as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations, has entered the second round of an ongoing global search for the seven new wonders of the world.

The Coral Triangle, a region that the Philippines shares with five other countries and representing the majority of the world's corals and marine-based species, also made the cut of 226 sites from among the original 441 entries to last year's Internet-based voting campaign.

The qualified national and multinational nominees from 222

NILAMAN A4

LAST OF 28 WONDERS The Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan which stretches up to 8.2 kilometers into over six other nominees to enter the next round of the ongoing search for the New 7 Wonders of the world being conducted by the Swiss-based Heritage Foundation. It's now the lone "wonder" candidate of the original seven located in the Philippines. It's competing against 226 wonders from around the world. RON CASTRO

# Brodetts vs Brodetts

## Dave and son say Richard, ma into drugs

NAME? MATTERS Dave Brodett, former basketball player and actor, raises the arm of his son Anthony tattooed with the family name to indicate that it is a prized possession. "It's all we've got," an emotional Brodett tells the House committee hearing the drug case of the so-called Alabang Boys. Behind center is Brodett's wife Marissa.

By Leila B. Salaverria

DRUG SUSPECT Richard Brodett, one of the so-called 'Alabang Boys," sold drugs and lived in a house where marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms were strewn about.

His mother joined him in using the substances and even sent her son on a trip to Sagada, Mountain Province, to get marijuana.

These accusations against one of three wealthy young men caught in a buy-bust operation in September came from his own uncle and cousin, who said they were fed up with Richard's activities that sullied the family name.

Dave Brodett, a former professional basketball player and actor (See story on Page A6), and his son Anthony testified yesterday before the House committee on dangerous drugs that Richard was a drug user and seller.

BRODETTS B6

IN THIS CORNER Butch and Myra Brodett go to the NBI on Monday with a photo of their son, Richard, one of the Alabang Boys, to show that he was allegedly maltreated after he was caught in a buy-bust operation by PDEA agents in September. On Wednesday, Anthony Brodett testifies at the House that his aunt Myra is also a user. RAFFY LERMA

## In praise of Magdalo men turned narcs and other incorruptibles

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

REBELLIOUS JUNIOR OFFICERS challenged to "walk your talk" were among the government operatives involved in the buy-bust operation in Ayala Alabang.

"They delivered," said Director Dionisio Santiago of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

Santiago, a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said yesterday he was satisfied with the officers.

They were among some 300 junior officers and soldiers calling themselves "Magdalo" who briefly seized the Oakwood Ayala Premier hotel in Makati City on July 27, 2003, demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo

BAYBAYIN A4

## 'Connection system' still alive in judiciary

By EJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora

BLAME CORRUPTION AND "the connection system" for the conduct of the lawyer of the so-called Alabang Boys, according to legal luminaries.

Law professor Carlos Medina of Ateneo de Manila University yesterday said Feliberto Verzosa's move to draft a release order on DOJ official stationery and transmit it to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for his sig-

CONNECTION A6

## Gonzalez: 3 boys' lawyer unethical

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez yesterday said the lawyer of the "Alabang Boys" was "unethical" for preparing not only a draft but a "complete" release order save for his signature.

"This is the first time I have encountered this. I believe there is some ethical issue here," Gonzalez said as the second day of the hearing conducted by the House

GONZALEZ B6

## Israelis stop firing for 3 hours

GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP—Israel ordered a three-hour pause in its offensive on Wednesday to allow food and fuel to reach besieged Palestinians as Israeli leaders debated whether to accept an international ceasefire plan or to expand the assault against Hamas.

With criticism rising of the spiraling civilian death toll and Gazans increasingly suffering the effects of nonstop airstrikes and shelling, Israel's military said it would open "humanitarian corridors" to allow aid supplies to reach Palestinians.

Israeli military spokesperson Peter Lerner said the "recess in offensive operations" was aimed at allowing in supplies and fuel, and would last from from 1 to 4 p.m. local time. He said similar lulls in the coming days would be considered.

Lerner said that even during

ISRAELIS A4

NO. 54 IN FORBES WORLD'S RICHEST, Adolf Merckle, 74

REAL ESTATE MOGUL Stanley Ho, 92

## German billionaire commits suicide

BERLIN—GERMAN BILLIONaire Adolf Merckle has been driven to suicide by financial fears, becoming the latest high-profile casualty of a global economic crisis that has claimed the lives of executives in Europe and the United States.

Merckle, 74, a respected businessman with a wife and four children, jumped in front of a train in the town of Blaubeuren in southwestern Germany, officials said on Thursday. His body was found Monday night on the railway tracks.

In 2008, the media shy billionaire was ranked as the world's 94th richest person and Germany's fifth wealthiest by Forbes magazine.

Hours before Merckle's

GERMAN A7

## So, no one shot dead Jun de Vera?

By Nikko Dizon

FOR THE WIDOW LILIA DE VERA, nothing of consequence was emerging from yesterday's resumption of the public hearing being conducted by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to determine accountability for the deaths of Alfonso "Jun" de Vera, their 7-year-old daughter and four other civilians.

Not one of the leaders of the

NO. NO ONE! A7

## Barefoot devotees may ride trains

PREVIEW OF A PROCESSION Early devotees of the Black Nazarene stage a procession on Wednesday with about 200 replicas of the 400-year-old image of the Black Nazarene enshrined in Quiapo Church.

By Riza T. Olchondra and Tina G. Santos

DEVOTEES WHO WISH TO GO barefoot as part of their ritual en route to Quiapo, Manila, for the annual procession of the Black Nazarene tomorrow will be allowed to take the Light Rail Transit, the train management announced yesterday.

Expecting a surge in passenger

BAREFOOT A4

Second FRONTPAGE
E-mail: pi_secondfrontpage@inq7.net Website: www.inquirer.net/main

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Cloudy with isolated rains over the eastern section of Visayas and Mindanao; cloudy skies with scattered rain showers. The rest of the country will experience partly cloudy to fair skies; cloudy skies and isolated rainshowers.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Cloudy with rain showers | Iligan/Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with rain showers |
| Baguio | Partly cloudy | Davao | Cloudy with rain showers |
| Tuguegarao | Cloudy with rain showers | Cebu | Partly cloudy |
| Legaspi | Cloudy with rain showers | Tacloban | Cloudy with rain showers |
| Puerto Princesa | Partly cloudy | Cotabato | Cloudy with rain showers |
| Iloilo | Cloudy with rain showers | Zamboanga | Partly cloudy |
| Kalibo | Cloudy with rain showers | Pagadian/Dipolog | Partly cloudy |
| Antique | Cloudy with rain showers | General Santos | Partly cloudy |

Weather Outlook for Metro Manila, Provincial Capitals and Cities by PAGASA

Mobile Alert: Text ON BALANCE (space) ON (space) to 2329 for Globe • Text BALANCE (space) ON (space) to 2366 for Smart

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# Captive cops safe, NPA says

## No funds yet for automated polls; Dick, Loren worried

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE CONTINUED FAILURE OF President Macapagal-Arroyo to submit a supplemental budget for poll automation for the 2010 elections has got Senators Richard Gordon and Loren Legarda worried.

Gordon suggested that the situation is probably in favor no elections in 2010 as "they're still thinking of the Con-ass and the Con-cha," referring to conspiracies that the administration is pursuing Charter change, either through a constitutional convention (Con-con) or a constituent assembly (Con-ass), to prolong Ms Arroyo's stay in power.

He dared the President to ask Congress to fund the computerization of the 2010 elections in desperate manner that she was pursuing Charter change (Cha-cha) so she could extend her term beyond June 30, 2010.

"The ball is in the court of Malacañang to release the budget for automated elections. The more she doesn't, the more people will think that she is trying to obstruct the elections because of Cha-cha ... to extend the term of the President," said Gordon who authored the amended Automated Elections Law.

The President has included the automation of the elected posts in her 18-point agenda. She has emphasized the need to modernize the country's election voting system, which relies on manual counting, in part brunt of the Nation 65 elections.

Gordon, an independent senator, said it was time for Ms Arroyo to answer her legacy, "she should be the President who brought honest, speedy and reliable elections to the country."

### Victim of circumstances

"I have no personal animosity with the President principally because she works hard. However, I think she has been a victim of circumstances. The takeover of the Palace under very enormous circumstances ... made her a captive of the political leaders of the country," he said.

He said "many compromises were made" by the administration in phase the ruling elite.

Sen. Loren Legarda said "a computerized election system that cannot guard against poll fraud is worse to useless."

The very essence of employing a computerized poll system was to guard against poll fraud, she said.

"My concern here a computerized poll system that can count votes, but which cannot determine whether the votes being counted are authentic or fraudulent," said Legarda.

The Comelec has enlisted the proposed budget for poll automation to P12.9 billion after Ms Arroyo rejected the P21-billion proposed supplemental budget it earlier submitted to the Department of Budget and Management.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo has submitted in a report that the Optical Mark Reader (OMR) technology, which the Comelec is proposing to use in the 2010 national elections, would not be able to flash not double or multiple registrants.

Melo was quoted as saying that the system would need cross-matching machines that could identify voters with double and multiple registrations.

But the supplemental budget is is seeking for the computerization does not include funding for the cross-matching machines.

## Meralco rates down this month

MANILA ELECTRIC CO. (Meralco) will see their electricity bills go down by 77 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) this month, as the generation charge component falls to just P4.30 per kWh.

This means that residential customers using 200 kWh a month will experience an 154 reduction in their bills, while those consuming 200 kWh will see their bills go down by P154.00.

Meralco vice president for utility economics Jeanna de la Peña said very low prices at the wholesale electricity spot market, as well as the continued use of heated gas by independent power producer First Gen Power Corp. For its 1,000-megawatt (MW) Sta. Rita and 300-MW San Lorenzo plants last month were the main drivers for the reduction.

This heated gas completed natural gas that was not consumed in 2002 to 2003 and was priced much lower. Natural gas prices are usually indexed against oil prices and moved with the preceding six months' average basket of fuel prices as specified in the contract with the gas utilities in this case the Malampaya consortium.

LUCENA CITY—THE COMMUNIST NEW People's army issued a statement yesterday saying the three policemen they captured in Rizal province last Saturday were "being treated well."

The statement sent to the Inquirer, and confirmed in a certain "Ramon Guerrero," a spokesman of the rebel group in Rizal province, said long- Ret Danilyng PO1 Alfred Tirado (Asia Cruz) and PO1 Arvin Agustin were all safe.

The three were captured by the NPA men the unarmed after it ambushed a police patrol car sent to investigate reports that rebels had burned a dump truck in Rodriguez town, aside from the three raiders, one police man died and two others were injured in the encounter.

### Geneva convention

The rebel statement said the three were in the hands of the "Hernino Armeto Armed Command" operating in Rizal and were being treated "according to the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Protocol II of the Geneva Convention."

However, Guerrero said the captive policemen would be "reconsigned for possible release against the people and the revolutionary movement." It added that "if warranted" they would be tried under the guerrilla's "revolutionary justice."

The NPA statement then said the Rizal rebel group was willing to "negotiate" for the release of the captives but demanded that the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police first call off their rescue operations.

With the end of the holiday truce, Guerrero said the communist leadership had ordered the rebels operating in Rizal province to start staging tactical offensives against government forces.

### No negotiation

Some police and military heroes have launched operations against the rebels in an effort to rescue the hostages. The rebels are reportedly fled to the mountainous border of Rizal and Bulacan.

The government has a "no-negotiation" policy of dealing with rebel groups.

Police said they would file charges of murder, kidnapping, arson, illegal use of explosives and robbery in band against the rebels.

The two injured policemen—PO1 Ricardo Flores and Michael Tarun—were brought to the general hospital in Camp Crame. They were awarded the Medalya ng Sugatang Magiting (Medal of Valor).

Three sustained injuries to the right leg while shrapnels were found in Flores' head. Both are scheduled to undergo surgery. **Delfin T. Mallari Jr. and Shereen Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon**

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## UN experts begin ebola tests on pigs

By Jerry R. Barro

EXPERTS FROM THREE UNITED NATIONS agencies have begun scientific tests on two hog farms in Luzon where a strain of the Ebola Reston virus was found last year.

The mission is important as this is the first time "that the virus has been found in swine, a food-producing animal, especially considering the potential implications for animal and human health and welfare," the team said in a press briefing yesterday.

Finding pork contained safe as long as it is handled and cooked properly and fought in markets surveilled by the government's National Meat Inspection Service, it said.

The mission, which includes experts from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the Paris-based World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Health Organization and three counterparts from the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Philippine military and health departments, consists of epidemiologists, laboratory specialists, veterinarians, food safety and public health and risk communication experts.

They said they would "address, through field and laboratory investigation important questions as to the source of the virus, its transmission, its virulence and its animal habitat, in order to provide appropriate guidance for animal and human health protection."

"The HAN Dr. Juan Lubroth, the mission's team leader, said the field investigators component started yesterday.

"We will do an initial investigation [of the large] 700-sow farm [that is also in] quite of control, and the risks for animal health and human health if there are any. Potentially yes they are there [but] we don't know the level of these risks," Lubroth said.

Although the team has only 10 days to conduct tests on the two farms, it would take months to learn more about the virus, said Candido Ebuenga, WHO risk communication officer.

Lubroth said the investigation would likely lead to more collaborative work and more missions.

"Our teams are doing field and laboratory investigation to determine where the Ebola Reston virus came from and how is we transmitted," said Ludwubbe.

"This work will be only the start of a lengthy process to address several issues, such as the source of the virus, transmission, its virulence and its natural habitat," she said.

Lubroth said it was the first time that a strain of the Ebola Zaire virus had been found outside monkeys and the first time ever worldwide that it had been found in swine. **With reports**

## Grenade rocks 'Iglesia' compound

COTABATO CITY—SUSPECTED MUSLIM separatist rebels tossed school grenade into the Iglesia ni Cristo compound in Kabacan, North Cotabato yesterday, causing damage but no injuries, police said.

The attack came just hours after security forces had disarmed a bomb planted under a road bridge.

The grenade was thrown by a suspected Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebel and landed on an empty basketball court inside the compound of the INC in the town of Kabacan.

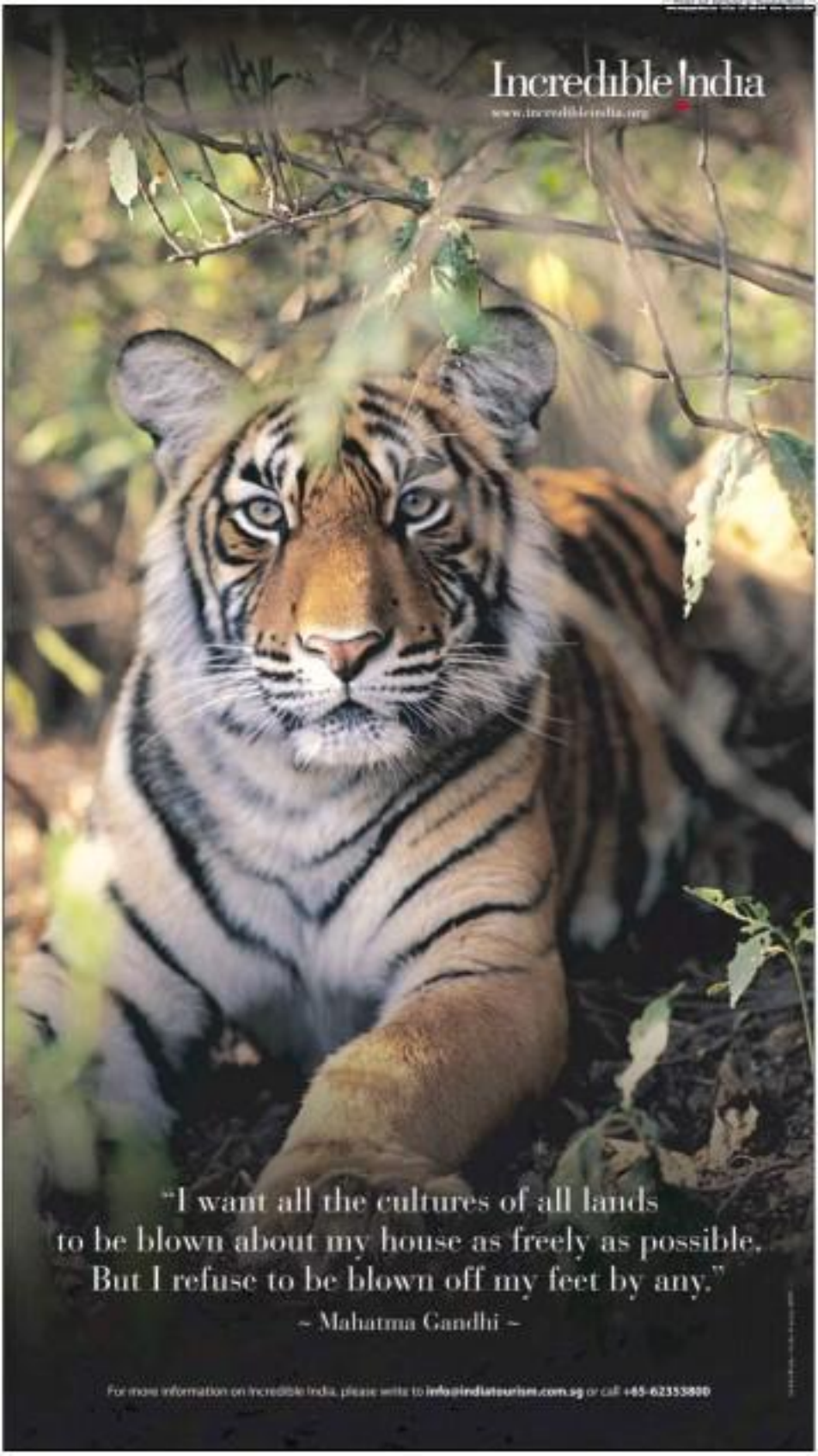
Nobody was hurt, as there was no one there when it happened. Damage was also minor," local police chief Senior Inspector Franklin Andro said the church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Police in November foiled three bombing attempts on the church, all of which were traced on the MILF, he said.

Earlier Wednesday, troops discovered a bomb under bridge in the nearby town of Sharif Aguak.

The device, made from a mortar shell rigged in a mobile phone, was similar to those used in previous bombings by the MILF in the roads since August last year, army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Alberto Ando said. **AFP**

TXTinfo WINNING NUMBERS FOR JANUARY 7, 2009 31 43 04 60 12 JACKPOT: P18,092,690.44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# In praise of Magdalo turned narcs, other incorruptibles

From page A1

...on alleged corruption.

Santiago said he took in 18 of the officers, most recently graduates of the Philippine Military Academy who were dismissed from the service after their honeymoon.

### Big difference

Santiago cited the 18 officers for their courage, battle experience and idealism.

Given the lucrative drug trade with easy money for bribes, Santiago said he challenged the dismissed junior officers to make good their word that they resisted attempts to ...the corruption.

"I reminded them, because they are idealistic. I told them, 'You walk your talk and if you find that it becomes your ruin, you are moved from the service,'" he said.

### Commendation

Santiago said the officers, some part of PDEA's 500-strong staff, had come to realize the big difference between fighting and remaining in the battlefield and entrapping drug traffickers in a police operation.

"They realized that every time I'm legal (implications ... illegal) they are now delivering, as reported," he said.

A member of PMA Class '94, Marine Maj. Ferdinand Marcelli...no headed the Scala-Ekinlang drug bust operation. He, however, did not take part in the Dalwood mutiny.

For his courage in wrestling and rejecting attempts to bribe him and his men in exchange for the release of the so-called "Alabang Boys," Marcelino is being eyed by Sec. Rodolfo Biazon for commendation in a formal ceremony.

Biazon said he would also recommend to the AFP that Marcelino be given the Distinguished Service Star, the highest noncombat award to a soldier.

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"It's about time we recognize good deeds performed by men and women in the public service," said Biazon, a former Philippine Marine commandant and AFP chief of staff.

Biazon referred to Marcelino's revelations in a radio interview yesterday that he was unable to provide for a sister who passed away after a battle with brain cancer.

### Assignment review

"To me that was a very great test to his integrity and to passed the test with flying colors," Biazon said.

Senior Marine officers spoke highly of Marcelino's service in Mindanao, particularly against the Abu Sayyaf bandits in the infamous Ipil-Pebson hostage-taking incident.

"He is very idealistic and would fight for what he believes in. I don't think anybody could bribe him nor corrupt him," Brig. Gen. Renato Miranda said.

But Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro yesterday said there was a need to review policies on the assignment of military officers to civilian agencies.

"By performing operations that are civilian in nature, our officers could be exposed to temptations which could also affect their careers," he said.

*With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Jocelyn R. Uy and Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

# Israelis stop firing for 3 hours

From page A1

...the pause, "for every attack against the Army there will be a response."

Gaza residents reported scattered gunfire and explosions even after it was supposed to have gone into effect, but the scale of fighting appeared to drop.

An Israeli leadership meeting in the morning in Tel Aviv, sounds of heavy gunfire and thick plumes of smoke engulfed the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City, Israel said it struck 40 Hamas targets during the hours of darkness. Gaza health officials said new strikes on Wednesday morning killed eight people.

### Strike near UN school

Strategy over an Israeli strike on Tuesday near a UN school that killed 39 people continued, with the UN agency responsible for the building demanding an "impartial investigation" into the attack that also wounded 55.

About 300 of the more than 650 Palestinians killed so far are civilians, according to Palestinian and UN figures. Of those killed, at least 130 are children age 16 and under, according to the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which tracks casualties.

The number of armed fighters killed is unclear. Israel says most fighters are known to have begun wearing civilian clothes and the organization is keeping its casualties secret and focusing its wounded and dead in secluded locations.

Israel has lost six soldiers since launching a ground offensive on Saturday, and four other Israelis have been killed by rocket fire, three of them civilians.

Israel's lull in operations could ease the plight of civilians in Gaza, where much of the territory has no power or running water, because pumps are dependent on electricity.

More than 500 aid trucks have been shipped into Gaza since operations began. But even when aid crosses into Gaza, military operations have prevented officials from distributing it, leading to food that began to spoil in storage.

A World Bank statement on Wednesday said there were growing signs of a severe public health crisis in Gaza because of a shortage of drinking water and an escalating failure of the sewage system.

Militants hit the Israeli city of Ashkelon on Wednesday with a medium-range rocket, causing no casualties.

Rocket fire has fallen off as Israeli troops tighten their hold on Gaza, raising new open areas used to launch rockets, but Gaza militants say they are still launching from heavily populated areas.

Israel's leaders—including the top leaders of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak—were to discuss whether to extend the operation in Gaza or move to accept a plan being proposed by Egypt and France to end the fighting.

### Key to ceasefire

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said the intensive calls for an immediate ceasefire by Israel and Palestinian factions for a limited period to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza and an urgent meeting of Israel and the Palestinian side as arrangements to prevent any repetition of military strikes and to deal with the reconstruction.

International Middle envoy Tony Blair on Tuesday said the key to any ceasefire would be an arrangement to stop weapons smuggling over the Gaza-Egypt border.

British President Nicolas Sarkozy also said he saw the component as a "small hope" for ending the Gaza violence.

Israeli officials have said any ceasefire agreement must prevent further rocket attacks by Gaza militants and put in place measures to prevent the smuggling of weapons and other contraband into the small Palestinian territory.

Hamas has demanded that Israel open Gaza's blockaded crossings as part of any agreement.

### Reservists called in

In the meantime, Israel has been making preparations to continue fighting. The military has called up thousands of reserve troops that it could use to expand the Gaza offensive, supporting the three brigade-size formations of regular troops now inside.

Defense officials said the troops would be ready for action by Friday. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the army's preparations are classified.

### 39 Palestinians killed

The France-Egyptian plan was given increasing urgency by the Israeli mortar strike over a UN school that killed 39 Palestinians and stirred the streets with blood.

The United Nations said the school was sheltering hundreds of people displaced by the assaults on Hamas militants. Israel said its troops returned fire on a Hamas squad that fired mortars at them from nearby.

Israel's military said its shelling—the deadliest single episode since Israel ground forces invaded Gaza on last Saturday—was an attack on a military target and accused Hamas militants of using civilians as cover.

### No militants in school

Christopher Gunness of the UN Relief and Works Agency, responsible for the school, said the agency says "99.9 percent certain there were no militants or military activity in its school."

That would not necessarily contradict Israel's claim that the militants were just outside.

Gunness demanded an investigation, and punishment for anyone found to have violated international law.

Two residents of the area who spoke with The Associated Press by telephone said they saw a small group of militants firing mortars rounds from a street near the school. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal. Gunness said 1,300 people were taking shelter from the shelling at the school.

### Excessive force

Human rights group Israel Barbaum said there were no militants there at the time.

The Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights said the presence of militants did not justify Israel's response.

"The presence of armed resistance does not justify in any way the use of excessive force that is disproportionate," the center said in a statement. *AP*

## *RP joins int'l calls for immediate ceasefire*

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY joined growing international calls for an immediate ceasefire in the new war in Gaza Strip.

"We, together with the United Nations, are calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas...to stop that violence that they insist on each other to prevent an issue be obtained," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in a press briefing.

"Let's hope, with God's help, that we'll be able to initiate our yearning for peace."

Malacañang has been closely monitoring developments in the Gaza Strip which caused 330 Palestinians are living, many of them minors of Palestinians.

### Intense fighting

The Department of Foreign Affairs said intense fighting rushed since the planned evacuation of 22 Filipinos yesterday.

Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. said the evacuation, with the Canadian mission as host point, was supposed to take off from the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Gaza City for the Erez Crossing to Israel at 1:30 p.m.

An earlier plan to move out 44 Filipinos also was aborted on Monday because of security concerns.

*Reports from Christine O. Esguerra and Cynthia D. Rigos*

# Palawan river ...

From page A1

...reminders. Summer inside limestones, such as the Grand Canyon in Colorado, Loch Ness in Scotland, the Black Waters in Germany, and Mineral Pool in Japan, alongside the Amazon, the Danube, the Dead Sea, the Great Barrier Reef, Ignace Falls, the Rainbow Desert, Mont Blanc and Niagara Falls.

"We congratulate the successful qualifying locations from the Philippines and wish them the best of luck in the second phase of voting," said Tin Herring, head of communications of New7Wonders, a private foundation based in Zurich, Switzerland, which is spearheading the search.

The finalists were established on 2007 by the Swiss Bern Canadian filmmaker, author and adventurer Bernard Weber to contribute to the protection of the world's human-built and natural heritage and to foster respect for the cultural diversity on our planet.

The first phase of online voting in the New7Wonders of Nature website (www.new7wonders.com) ended on Dec. 31, 2008, at midnight on the International Date Line (8 p.m. in Manila).

### 1 nominee per country

Palawan's 8.2-kilometer underground river set on a huge primeval karst formation in the southwestern coast of Puerto Princesa City hosted six other local natural attractions in last year's polling.

According to the NEW rules, only one nominee from each country is allowed to proceed into the second of three stages.

Polling to handle the first round was erstwhile voting leader Tubbataha Reefs, also located in Palawan province; Mayon Volcano in Albay province; Chocolate Hills of Bohol, Mayon Volcano in Albay province; Chocolate Hills of Bohol, Mayon Volcano in Albay province; Mount Pinatubo in Zambales and Taal Volcano in Batangas.

In a statement, Herring noted the strong and enthusiastic participation of the other national nominees that are not among the finalists, many of whom already benefited from a significant increase in worldwide awareness.

### Final list in 2 years

Of the original nominees worldwide, 100 or more than 90 percent were eliminated, according to the organizers. The final list of the world's seven new wonders will be drawn through international voting and an international panel of experts in two years.

Herring said their group expected over 1 billion votes to be cast during the first round. The panel will select the 21 finalists from the top 77.

On July 21, the third and final phase of voting will begin, Herring said. "The people of the world will then have approximately two years to vote among the 21 finalists for the official New7Wonders of Nature to be revealed in 2011."

### Nature's blessings

"We are proud to announce that the Philippine nature's have stood strong in the first round of voting. This allows to us of the support of Filipinos, as well as our neighbors, in helping our natural sites make them mark in the global scale," Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said in a statement.

"With billions of supporters all over the globe, promotion of spectacular sites from all over the world will be seen to greater heights. It is also very important to call on the considerable promotion of these tourism sites, which are nature's blessings," Durano added.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn said the selection of the underground river was an affirmation of the city's continued efforts to promote the place as a world-class destination and its commitment to preserve a "wonderful natural heritage" for the next generations.

"We're very happy to make it to the top despite joining this campaign at a late time. We want to tell the people from all over the world who have come to ride in and support us," said Ateneo Mendoza, promoted into manager of the river.

### Coral reefs

The Coral Triangle features an abundance of coral reefs straddling the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

Covering more than 6.5 million square kilometers with over 600 coral species, scientists say that encompass 75 percent of all species known in the world, the region is regarded by environmental conservationists as top priority for conservation of marine life.

More than 3,000 species of fish live in the Coral Triangle, including the Asian fish—the dwarf shark—and the living fossil coelacanths, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

Among the Philippines' neighbors, the selected entries include Vietnam's Ha Long Bay, Cambodia's Tak Lomin Lake; Brunei's Tasek Merimbun Lake; Nam Ha National Park, Singapore's Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, Malaysia's Sipadan Island, Thailand's Ko Phi Phi Island, Java Island in East Timor, the Bangui Archipelago of Burma (Myanmar) and the Shikong Island, shared by China and mainland Southeast Asian countries. Reports from Jerome Aning, Howard M. Dominguez and Rodinaprin Anda, Inquirer Southern Luzon

# Barefoot devotees may ride trains

From page A1

...rehome, the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) said it was taking its policy for the benefit of pilgrims by limiting to one of the country's biggest religious feasts.

Predominantly male devotees, in numbers usually peaking between 2 and 3 million, are expected to pack the traditional procession route around Quiapo church, a walking distance from the Luneta Park LRT station. Carriedo, Recto, Central, D. Jose and Pl Antonio.

### Tight security

LRTA Administrator Melquiades Robles said security measures would be beefed up to allow for light rail. Police and military guards and 65 troops will be deployed at the stations. Medical personnel and additional rollers will also be on stand by.

"We are more than ready to accommodate the increase in ridership on Friday, which we expect to be around 300,000," Robles said, assuring passengers that there will be more than enough trains to service them.

He said the LRTA was holding an briefing up to 21 trains each 2 "spares" on Friday.

As part of their parents (sons) and the symbolic imitation of Christ's suffering, Nazarene devotees go barefoot and ride public buildings their way into the dark crowds, hoping to get close enough to touch the life-size statue of Jesus carrying the cross or to kiss the gilded carriage bearing the image.

Other devotees would have their towels or handkerchiefs rubbed on the 400-year-old statue, which is widely held to be miraculous.

### 200 replicas

In what may be considered a preview of the Jan. 9 feast, thousands of early pilgrims yesterday converged to Quiapo for a procession featuring some 200 replicas of the Nazarene.

The images came in various sizes, some on shoulders, others mounted on trucks and pedicabs by fanatic worshippers who paid no mind to the afternoon drizzle.

Many of the participants came not only from different parts of Metro Manila but also from the nearby provinces of Bulacan, Batangas and Pampanga.

According to a member of the Quiapo church staff, yesterday's procession was held purely to "decongest" the mammoth crowds that are expected on the actual day of the feast.

### Blessings

Rosalie Targuez, a 35-year-old housewife from Tondo, Manila, said her devotion to the Black Nazarene since 1986 has perpetually kindled her faith in God.

"I just decided to devote my life to Him, even without me having a particular wish for Him to grant," Targuez said.

Nolberto Tigas, a devotee since 1994, said joining the feast has been his way of thanking the Black Nazarene for the many blessings he had received, like when his elder sister was cured of bone cancer.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 8, 2009
After Epiphany

1 Jn 4:19-5:4
Lk 4:14-22

Reading
Gospel

Jesus acted with the power of the Spirit, and he became famous in the town where Him spread throughout all that territory. He began teaching in the synagogues of the area and everyone praised him.

When Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the favorable year of mercy."

Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, "Today these prophetic words come true even as you listen."

All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while he kept on speaking of the grace of God. Nevertheless they asked, "Who is this but Joseph's son?"

Commentary

Only in this Gospel do we find Jesus declaring the reasons for his mission in such clear and compassionate terms. He taught them things in the synagogues, places of public worship, where Jewish beliefs were learned, interpreted, improved, and passed on. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit were upon him so that he could show that he was sent by God. He was not promising a political solution to the ills of his day — and yet, it was for political reasons that he evoked uprising just to death by the authorities.

What about our relationship with the world. Jesus was powerful as well as active, illuminated by his example. As today's world, where fame and glamour are elevated to almost obscene heights, it is unlikely that Jesus would be any more acceptable to the powers that be than he was in his own time. And yet, Jesus' invitation to us is to be as true to the poor as those to suffering, to the blind and the oppressed, down through the ages. We do well to reflect upon the several places which Jesus draws to us as we draw near our lives.

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# Pangandamans go to NBI for golf brawl probe

By Tina G. Santos

TWO DAYS AFTER FILING a complaint against businessman Delfin dela Paz and his 14-year-old son at the Ayala Prosecutor's Office, the scion of Agusan del Norte Secretary Nasser Pangandaman yesterday declared at the National Bureau of Investigation with a copy of their affidavits regarding the controversial volley-ball brawl.

"It's the same affidavit we filed at the Ayala Prosecutor's Office last Monday," said lawyer Teodoro Barrera, who submitted the documents to the NBI on behalf of his client Nasser, 30, and Nasser Pangandaman Jr., 27. "This is to aid the NBI in its own investigation."

The young Pangandamans were earlier accused of beating up dela Paz, 56, and his son Marcelito as retaliation over golfing etiquette.

The Pangandamans countered that the dela Pazes started the fight.

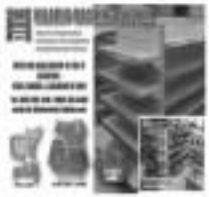
Barrera stressed that the Pangandamans were open to an amicable settlement, but he stressed that "the instigator should come from the Dela Pazes."

"I will not prevent my clients from entering into a settlement. But my clients are the aggrieved party here, so I believe the offer for a settlement should come from the Dela Pazes," Barrera told Inquirer.

The NBI asked the Pangandamans to appear at the bureau last Tuesday but the latter were a no-show.

Barrera explained that they only learned about the bureau's invitation in the newspapers.

"It was not communicated in a timely manner," Barrera explained, adding that his clients are willing to cooperate in the probe.



## NEWSBRIEFS

### Another fire in Malacañang

MECER company workers installing new pipes outside Malacañang yesterday lit underground electric cables and sparked a fire, cutting power in some buildings. At issue is 12 years, lights were out at the Executive Guesthouse and the adjacent New Executive Building inside the Palace compound, prompting staff members and reporters to rush out of the buildings.

Just as the lights went out, flames spouted from an open manhole right outside the two buildings. A Malacañang emergency crew just cut the line by shutting off power to the area.

Firemen from the Manila Water Services Inc. knock underground electric cables while digging holes with a jackhammer to install new pipes. This caused a short circuit and sparked a fire, they said. The fire caused minimal damage. It came two days after the fall the office of Undersecretary Lorelei Fajardo at the Gaharan ng Maria inside the Palace compound.

The President was not in Malacañang during yesterday's incident. She was in Cagayan de Oro City. TJ Burgonio

### Pinay drug mule held in KL

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian police have detained 13 people on suspicion of working for an international syndicate that allegedly smuggled heroin from Pakistan, an official said Wednesday. A Singaporean and a Philippine woman were arrested at the Low Cost Carrier Terminal international Airport in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, said Othman Harun, deputy director of the Federal Narcotics Department.

Seven Nigerians, three Malaysians and a Pakistani were subsequently held in separate raids in the city later Monday, he said. The 13 suspects are believed to be members of an international syndicate that trafficks Pakistani heroin to Malaysia and distributes it from Malaysia.

Othman said the Singaporean woman, who was detained with about 500 grams of heroin and was headed to China, is in police custody and may be charged with drug trafficking, an offense that carries the death sentence.

Police did not seize any other drugs in the raids but confiscated a car, foreign currency and laptops, Othman said. Investigations showed the unidentified Filipina was on her way to Pakistan to pick up drugs, he said. AP

### Cebu Pacific plane lands safely in emergency

A CEBU Pacific plane bound for Catbalan, Aklan developed engine trouble and made an emergency landing about 10 minutes after taking off at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila yesterday morning. Flight 5J 800 reported trouble on the ATR-72-500 propeller plane's right engine and landed safely at around 7:21 a. m. All 50 passengers and four crew members were unharmed, according to the Manila International Airport Authority media affairs chief Connie Bungay.

"The pilot noticed abyre lights blinking on the instrument panel which warned that something was wrong with the engine. He followed aviation procedures and prepared for emergency landing," Cebu Pacific vice president for communications Candice Iyog told reporters.

A statement from the airline said all passengers were given travel vouchers and took another Cebu Pacific flight for Caticlan via Kalibo two hours later. Caticlan is the small airport nearest the resort island of Boracay. Jaime Aning

### DENR nixes accord with SBMA

AFTER realizing the extent of the environmental damage that might be caused by a resort casino project inside Subic, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday revoked an agreement with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) allowing the agency to locate its own environmental inspectors.

Architect Felino "Jun" Paalisa, who blew the whistle on the destruction of mangrove ditches to make way for the project, said the move of the DENR was "positive."

"But they have to move faster to save the trees," Paalisa told the Inquirer. In a statement sent to media yesterday, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza said he revoked an agreement the DENR signed in 2008 designating the SBMA to oversee environmental permits and clearances inside the former US naval facility. This means that the DENR, and not the SBMA, will now have sole authority to implement environmental laws inside the freeport zone. Alexis Romero

### SC watch: Text BKS to 2948

SO WHAT do you think of these Supreme Court nominees? Type BKS and send to 2948, Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. yesterday said that five candidates have made it to the shortlist of nominees to the position of the resolute Justice of the Supreme Court, which was vacated by Justice Ruben Reyes last Jan. 5.

Pangilinan, a nominee of the Danny Korte Supreme (DKS), urged people to text the group of their inaction, views or information on the five nominees, namely: Court of Appeals Associate Justice Mario Victoriano Jr., Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teodoro Peralta, Manila Law School Dean Cesar Villanueva, Court of Appeals Justice Portia Aliño-Hormachuelos and Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Francisco Villaruz. To send their text message, they should type BKS and send it to 2948.

Justice Adolf Azcuna is also scheduled to retire next month and five other justices are expected to retire this year. They are Dante Tinga (May 11), Consuelo Ynares-Santiago (Oct 5), Leonardo Quisumbing (Nov 6), Minita Chico-Nazario (Dec. 5), and Mrs. Alicia Martinez (Dec. 19). Christine Avendaño

### Upsilon alumni congress set Saturday

THE UPSILON ZETA Sigma Phi Alumni Association (USPHA) will host its 12th World Congress on Saturday at the Sylvia ng Alumni of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. The two-congressman Francisco Ariag Jr., USPHA president, said fraternity members from abroad will also attend the congress. Founded in 1918, Upsilon the oldest university fraternity in the country. It has 5,000 members, including those serving in the Senate, with Sonas Antonio Angel spending as chairman.

Plenary session opens the day-long affair at 8 a.m., with resolutions to follow shortly in the morning session, Ariag said. Another session is set in the afternoon, after which the traditional Grand Indio Party will take place. The session also boasts of inducting names that have in one way or another made the country's political, social and economic landscapes as vibrant as it had been.

# Brodetts vs Brodetts

From page A1

The testimony is seen to boost the accusation of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) that Richard was part of a syndicate that peddled drugs in nightspots for the rich and famous.

The PDEA accused Richard and Jorge Joseph in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City, and Joseph Tecson at the Aromera Center in Cubao, Quezon City, on Sept. 30, 2008. Seized from them were Ecstasy tablets, cocaine and marijuana.

## Who and son

PDEA agents later alleged that they were offered billion of up to P50 million to drop the charges against the three.

Dave, who is the brother of Richard's father, Daniel, came to the committee hearing with wife Shalimar, son Anthony and PDEA spokesperson Derrick Carreon.

Dave's family got in touch with the PDEA and has been following up the case months ago, Carreon said.

Dave told lawmakers that his decision to speak was voluntary and that he wanted to clear the family's name.

## Name disrespected

"Yung pangalan namin parang nilapastangan na ng mga inaakusahan [the family name is being disrespected by my siblings. They have not realized that they are not the only Brodetts. We are also Brodett Jr.]," he said.

Dave's other brother is Philip, a former divorcee and vice president of Philcomsat Holdings Corp., a firm sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

Dave said Richard's mother Myra was also to blame for her son's conduct.

"Si Myra pero lang sinipsip [Myra only kissed up to] Imee (Marcos) para lang gumanda ang buhay niya. Sya ang nagsabi sa bata na nagbigay ganitong Imee (Myra appears to be very simple, as if she has not done anything wrong. She was the one who pushed her son to be like this)," he said.

Myra Tanson Brodette is a real estate broker. She was charged in 2003 with tax evasion by the Bureau of Internal Revenue for failing to settle tax deficiencies amounting to P8.3 million in income taxes and P32.1 million in value-added tax payments.

The Tecsons tried to get the side of Richard "Ricky" Brodett during the hearing, but the latter's lawyer, Ferdie Armino, said the latter refused to issue a statement, saying the family has yet to discuss the matter. Ricky himself refused to comment on his brother's allegations.

Dave's statement also tried to exude Philip Brodett to get his reaction, but repeated calls and text messages made to his mobile phone went unanswered.

## Teaching basketball, golf

Dave, who runs coaches Ian, Richard's golf coach, said he also suspected that nobody would get his services if the family name kept being besmirched.

As new point during his testimony, he stopped speaking, apparently overcome with emotion. Dave lawmaker asked for water to be given to him.

Later, Dave was seen wiping his eyes as his son Anthony patted his back.

In his testimony, Anthony said Richard used and sold drugs. The former also provided details of the role of Richard's mother in her son's drug dependence.

Anthony, who operated a "fender" barter in the night area, said he and Richard knew each other since they were kids.

"What I know is since 16 he was a user. I don't want to be a hypocrite. I was caught to use drugs. As time went on, the result is I did nothing because that's who I am: no self. So how could you reach the child when the mother is a user? Before, I used to stay in their house. Drugs were all over the place," Anthony said.

When asked, Anthony said the drugs he saw in the house were marijuana and "shomos," short for methamphetamine, the hallucinogenic variety.

Richard also once tested positive for drugs when he underwent a drug test at the Land Transportation Office, according to Anthony.

Myra also sent Richard to Singapore to receive medication, he added.

Asked if Richard's family was in the drug business, Anthony replied: "All I can say is Richard really sells drugs. Yes, period."

## Matter of principle

Anthony said his decision to speak out against his cousin was a matter of principle, even though he knew that he and his family could be harmed.

"What I am saying is a matter of principle. My identity is at stake. My and my siblings' future is at stake ... All we have to do is protect ourselves now," he said.

Anthony said his family name stands out, and not all Brodetts were rich.

"We might be stranded in tomorrow. You'll never know. Dealing with this people, you never know," he added.

## Disbelief

Anthony also expressed disbelief at the claims of his relatives about Richard.

"We're saying this now because they are opposing an (SAA) and saying that Richard is a quiet boy and stuff. It really bothers me already because they would be outright sons and they are believing their lies," he said.

Carreon told reporters that the agency was looking after the family's safety, and pointed out that its agents accompanied Dave Brodett's family as they left the House of Representatives.

## Agency pleased

Carreon said the PDEA was pleased that Dave's family decided to speak up. "Definitely we appreciate their coming out," he said.

He said Dave's family got in touch with the agency a week after the three young men were arrested to check on the status.

His family also wanted the PDEA that Richard's lawyer would push for the release of the three suspects.

Mariano was the one who informed the agency that there were a claim that PDEA Director General, Dionisio Santiago, was supposedly bribed.

"Basically, you could surmise that they are adversely affected that one of the accused was carrying their family name," Carreon said.

## *Dave Brodett: Basketball player, character actor*

By Marinel R. Cruz
Entertainment

DAVE BRODETT IS A FORmer basketball player of the San Beda Red Lions who became a member of the Crispa Redmanizers squad in the 1970s.

His Crispa teammates included Atoy Co, Philip Cezar, Abet Guidaben and Bogs Adornado.

With his dark, brooding looks, the surname joined the movie industry, becoming a character actor.

He was last seen in the Tirso Natividad action-drama "Hanggin May Hanggin" (1998), a Star Cinema production that headlined Phillip Salvador and Aquarius Iglupay.

Dave is known mostly for straight-guy roles and he was posting character roles in films starring sexy actresses like Elizabeth Oropesa, Alma Moreno and Chanda Romero.

### First movie

His first movie, Sampaguita Pictures' "Mag-Ingat Kayong Biyuda ang Umibig," merged by the late Eusebio "Ebong" Cortes, was released in 1975. It starred Oropesa with Ramon Revilla and Rita Avila.

Two years later, Dave was seen in the Celso Ad Castillo thriller "Bilanggo," produced by Rosa Productions, alongside Albert Martinez, Rosanna Ortiz, Rita Avila and Eddie Garcia.

Dave was also in the cast of Carlos' "Kapag sa Araw, Kapag sa Gabi," the first-ever Regal Entertainment production and Oropesa's launching movie.

In 1989, he was in a TV-movie series titled, "A Dangerous Life," which was also released in the United States, Finland and Germany.

That year, he was seen in the action-flick "Sico Encargado Brigada," a piece on urban assassins of the communist New People's Army directed by Jony del Rosario for the independent outfit Olympia Pictures.

### Few show his friends

"His career in show biz was short-lived. I don't remember him being involved in controversies when he was still an actor," said movie writer Mario Bautista.

"Few had very few friends in the industry. Many found him to be aloof," said talent manager Ethel Ramos, also an entertainment writer.

Dave also tried his hand at script writing, doing the screenplay of the comedy flick "Six Million Centavos Man" (1980) starring Eddie Mesa. He also wrote "Kanin mo ang Ilo ni Magtanggol" (1981) for Vina Films.

# Gonzalez: 3 'Alabang Boys' lawyer unethical

From page A1

committee on dangerous drugs on the controversy surrounding the arrest of the Alabang Boys.

Gonzalez scheduled lawyer Wilfredo Velasco for claiming that he had given the three drugs suspect his choice—drug suspects Richard Brodett, Joseph Tecson and Jorge Joseph—would be released before Christmas.

Gonzalez said he refused to sign the draft release order because he had not received the resolution of Senior Assistant Prosecutor Aristocrito Zuño recommending the dismissal of charges against the suspects.

The justice secretary said he received the resolution only on Dec. 22.

Gonzalez said he got the draft order from Velasco through Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor (whose secretary brought the draft release order to the justice secretary's office) on Dec. 24.

## 'Press crowd to rue'

"It was a complete release order, not a draft. My name was there, a little bit misspelled, and it just assisted for my signature. I told my secretary I will not sign that," Gonzalez said.

Velasco, who admitted that drafting a resolution order was "not a normal procedure," said he, along with Brodett's mother, pleaded with Gonzalez in the justice secretary's office on Dec. 23.

"I told him that we really like release him now with this backup [referring to Aquino report]? People will think I'm involved," Velasco said.

Velasco pressed on and told Gonzalez that the feeble cry was a story concocted by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to tie his hands. Still, Gonzalez refused saying, "When can I do, the press is (sic) in me," the lawyer said.

## Study matter

Velasco claimed that Gonzalez told him that he would study the matter and that he had even offered to have the suspects released on furlough with the condition that they would report to the justice secretary's office on Dec. 24.

"To me, he gave me hope, he said he would study the matter," Velasco said. "What else does study the matter mean? He said it three times. That studying it gave me hope that he would finally release them."

Gonzalez was then off and said: "I'm sorry but that is not correct. What I said 'I cannot release them because I have not yet studied it.'"

"It doesn't matter if he got inspiration from that. There was no mention of draft order for release by me. The main reason I told Velasco is that I have not read the resolution. So how could I order a release on a case which I have not yet studied?" the justice secretary said.

Velasco said he got the resolution dismissing the charges on Dec. 19 but the PDEA refused to release the respondents since it could not verify the identity of the persons served and the agency later released a story about an alleged P50-million bribe given to the justice secretary.

This prompted Brodett's uncle, Philip, to ask Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor to follow up why the PDEA had declined to release his clients.

## Verzosa's theory

Verzosa said he "took a chance" that Gonzalez would sign his draft order.

"That theory is the moment prosecutors signed it, then the case is automatically dismissed. The automatic review is an internal order. Our theory is the right of the person to be free and this kicks in once the case is dismissed," Verzosa said.

But Gonzalez was adamant. Even if the resolution dismissing the case had been signed by Zuño and State Prosecutor Phillip Ellaga, Gonzalez said: "That is technically invalid for purposes of effects because of the provisions in the Revised Administrative Code."

"As a general principle, yes they (suspects) are released pending review but not in the case of smuggling and drugs (the penalty is more than five years) where there is mandatory review and there is no automatic release," Gonzalez said.

## False hope

"The fact is the prosecutors know that cases of smuggling and drugs should be submitted to automatic review. Technically, the case is under automatic review so there should be no release. And it gave false hope to parties so that they were entitled to release because the case is over like there is a standing requirement under my power of supervision and control that I can overturn resolutions any time probably. It is very rare cases. I want to be convinced by the Office of the President," Gonzalez said.

He said he had 10 days to decide whether to uphold or overturn the resolution dismissing the charges. Congress will resume its hearing after Gonzalez has come up with his decision.

## Different tune

When Gonzalez left the hearing, Zuño and Prosecutor John Reinaldo Iantcher of the resolution dismissing the case) sang a different tune.

Zuño claimed that it had long been a practice in the Department of Justice (DOJ) that suspects were allowed to be released after a resolution for their dismissal had been signed by the state prosecutor even without the signature of the justice secretary.

"That's the practice at the DOJ. It was only on Jan. 5 that Justice Secretary Gonzalez issued an order clarifying the matter that no release would be made unless the resolution has been signed," Reinaldo said.

Reinaldo's answer riled a number of congressmen with Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco moving to cite him for contempt for "trifling with the congressmen" and trying to "spill their beans."

This was later amended to have Reinaldo show cause why he should not be cited for contempt.

## Circular ignored

Zuño, who has been with the justice department for 18 years, countered with Reinaldo's position, saying that Memorandum Circular No. 46, calling for an automatic review of the dismissed cases involving illegal drugs, had been ignored by the department for the past 10 years.

The congressmen were puzzled by Reinaldo and Zuño's statements contradicting Gonzalez's position that they decided not to summon Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Rep. Ronron Duterte, the chief justice and Supreme Court justices to June 2003, to determine his main issues in dismissing an automatic review.

# 'Connection' system, corruption alive in judiciary

From page A1

nators was highly irregular.

"The (Senate) might have been comfortable enough with the system and the people to come up with a draft and send it to the justice secretary—something like an ordinary lawyer will be careful not to do," said Medina, who teaches constitutional law.

Senator Sen. Franklin Drilon, who had also served as justice secretary, agreed: "It only shows that the connection system is still very prevalent not only in the DOJ, but to the entire bureaucracy."

## 'Highly improper'

It was also "highly improper" for lawmakers to meet with a drug suspect's parents and lawyer while a drug case is pending before his office, lawyer Romeo Poquiz added.

Poquiz said Gonzalez had "no business" meeting with Velasco and the parents of Richard Brodett, one of the Alabang Boys, since a dismissed drug case involving the young Brodett and two others was awaiting automatic review.

"It's highly improper for him to allow a litigant and his lawyer to appear before him while a case is pending before his office," Poquiz said in a phone interview, adding the justice secretary could face administrative liability for this.

Gonzalez's act was no different from a judge who "talked to one party and his counsel in the absence of another party and his counsel," said the 46-year-old lawyer who has filed cases against officials and companies on behalf of aggrieved citizens.

It would have been prudent if Gonzalez had invited the counsel of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to appear before him with the lawyer of Brodett, Poquiz pointed out.

Senator Ina admitted that he and Brodett's parents met with Gonzalez on the afternoon of Dec. 23 last year to press for the release of Brodett, Joseph Tecson and Jorge Joseph.

Prosecutors dismissed the charges against the three, who were arrested in buy-bust operations by PDEA agents on Sept. 30, but the dismissal was subject to automatic review by the DOJ.

But Drilon, who served as justice secretary during the Aquino administration, said Gonzalez could not be faulted for meeting with the litigants and their lawyer.

"He's both a quasi-judicial public official and a Cabinet member. It's very difficult to attach wrongdoing on his behavior," Drilon said. "He's a public official; he can entertain visitors. And he didn't grant the application."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita agreed. "If I were secretary of justice that is just input when I conduct review of case. I don't think we should give malice to that," he said in a brief ing.

"That's highly irregular. That is not usually done but it's an open secret in the legal profession that if somebody is trying to facilitate the issuance of an order, he usually (appears) in order that the signature of a judge, prosecutor or hearing officer," Poquiz said.

There are times when a judge, prosecutor or hearing officer asks the facilitator—usually the lawyer of a defendant—to prepare the draft for his signature, the lawyer said.

"Nobody will leave the gate to prepare an order for the signature of somebody in the case because [sometimes, orders he's remain be can] get this signed and get away with it," he added.

Francisco is among those who filed charges against Fiel Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in connection with the graft-tainted $329-million National Broadband Network deal.

Francisco, Medina and Monsod are alumni of the Ateneo College of Law and are fraternity brothers in the Professional Order of Utopia.

Chair Medina: "We (Senate) should be disciplined. That's the problem. Why did he do that? There's an excuse for such behavior. It's beyond lawyering."

Ermita said: "On the face of it, it's not regular."

Abrenica's behavior and the issuance of his draft release order to Gonzalez through the office of Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor again highlighted corruption in the judiciary as well as easy access of the rich to the justice system, according to Francisco.

"The members of the judiciary are in a dismal state. They keep denying that corruption is going on, but we have a very corrupt judiciary. The litigants, lawyers know that it has become a sport for survival," he said.

"How does one survive in a corrupt judicial system if he doesn't go along with it? That's the question lawyers and litigants are asking," Francisco added.

Medina, also the executive director of the Ateneo Human Rights Center and a convener of the Legal Network for Truthful Elections, said: "The problem with the justice system is that the poor have less access to it than the well-connected, rich and powerful."

Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez said the controversy facing the justice department was "symptomatic" of the corruption affecting the department and the rest of the bureaucracy.

"It is now the department store of justice. For the right amount of money you can shop at the DOJ for any order that you want," Chavez said.

## *'Implied endorsement'*

JUSTICE UNDERSECRETARY RICARDO Blancaflor's ministerial of the draft release order to Secretary Raul Gonzalez, which could have freed three drug trafficking suspects before Christmas last year, was a move involving more than an "implied endorsement" by Gonzalez, Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago said.

This was according to an activist lawyer and a former officer of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, one of the legal eagles who yesterday weighed in on the controversial case of the so-called Alabang Boys.

"That might create the impression that there is an implied endorsement.... The danger of an implied endorsement was there," said lawyer Leonard de Vera.

De Vera is an official of the Legal Aspect for All Movement (LEAD) and is a former national executive vice president of the IBP. The IBP is a forum wherein the country's lawyers may be under an ensemble for breach of ethical standards.

De Vera said the fact that Baldomero Velasco, lawyer of the Alabang Boys, pointed the draft order on a Department of Justice letterhead also contributed to the impression of an implied endorsement.

"What Blancaflor should have done was to have given in toll Velasco's messenger to just bring the document to the Office of the Secretary himself," De Vera said. Secretary Gonzalez

# So, no one shot dead Jun de Vera?

Front page A1

police units would admit to having been assigned in the area where her loved one's were found dead.

"So no one killed my husband and child," she said, closing in her voice and tears in her eyes.

De Vera was killed in a police operation in Bulacan City last Dec. 5 while crouching beside a parked jeepney by a motorbike could only be a cop, according to an eyewitness.

**Hilario Inciong, a resident of** United Pandapan Subdivision and a former vice mayor of a Nueva Ecija town, recounted the killing of De Vera.

Inciong testified that he had asked the police operatives for the identity of the dead man on the street.

"They told me it was one of the robbers. But I couldn't keep still, so I asked my fountainhead help to check the photo album of the vehicle that was shot at. When I found the plate number, I knew it was Jun and his daughter," Inciong said in Filipino.

He added that earlier that night, De Vera and some of their friends had played "tong-its," a popular card game.

But Sen. ofllrmin pointedly (denied) their men of responsibility for the civilian deaths.

### Cooperative

But Eso CHR Chair Leila de Lima, the police units were being "cooperative" despite the backsliding points raised in the hearing.

"We have no reason to complain except that inside at the Highway Patrol Group (HPG) is concerned, it seems there's some stabbling going on," she said.

De Lima noted that among the police units involved in the operations, it was the HPG that was nearest to the scene where De Vera's body and vehicle, an Isuzu Crosswind, were found.

Chief Supt. Leocadio Santiago Jr., director of the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force (SAF), testified that all 10 SAF officers were armed and issued only an Armalite rifle but not a pistol.

Santiago said the 10 SAF officers were also not issued any vehicle

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OPINION

# Holes in DOJ

THE JURY IS STILL OUT ON THE CASE OF THE alleged bribery involving the "Alabang Boys," but already it seems clear that the Department of Justice has some housekeeping to do.

The most glaring instance of irregularity is the preparation on official DOJ stationery by Prosecutor Venancio Veranio, the defendants' counsel, of a release order for the three young men, for signature by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. This is of course anomalous, since such orders should be prepared only by government lawyers.

**EDITORIAL**

Veranio explained that his act of legal exuberance as prompted by the Christmas spirit. "I was trying to catch the Christmas season and I waited and waited and waited," Veranio said, after he caused the draft order to be sent to Gonzalez on Dec. 23. "Unfortunately, he refused to sign it."

That the draft order even reached the justice secretary's desk (literally) is cause for concern. We have long known that, whether out of bureaucratic sloth or individual avarice, lawyers of involved parties have sometimes ended up writing official decisions: court rulings, prosecutors' resolutions, release orders. Veranio's transgression effort shows us how it is done.

He used long experience to accumulate favors; this, for instance, is how he was able to obtain official DOJ letterheads.

He used the convenience of a high-level connection to facilitate the paper work. In this case, Veranio used his relationship with Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor, a fellow member of a law school fraternity, to his advantage. This convenience works even though, as in this case, Blancaflor was not in his office and did not have a chance to look at the documents. All it takes is the cynicism to insert the draft order into "the proper channels."

Not least, he also used the ambiguity inherent in language. When Blancaflor's secretary called him to ask what the document was about, Veranio simply replied that he and Gonzalez had already discussed it.

Indeed they did, but Gonzalez has told reporters that in that discussion, he had already told Veranio that he would not sign any release orders. In other words, Veranio used the most tenuous connection to reality (that he had spoken with Gonzalez) to assure Blancaflor's secretary that his document was in order.

It was, of course, no such thing. Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, who signed the original DOJ resolutions on line, 2 already is reorganizing the release order for the three young men, called Veranio's maneuver "not normal." Veranio himself explained it to terrain anyone dealing with a corrupt organization would find familiar: "I am just facilitating the order. Maybe I was a little bit overzealous."

The justice department also seems to have tolerated a culture of retaliation. The answers of DOJ lawyers to questions raised at the House committee hearings about the procedures involved in the release of suspected illegal drug users and pushers have been less than illuminating. Under the Manual of Prosecutors, the chief state prosecutor has the authority to conclude the resolution of a case. Gonzalez, however, had issued a department order requiring his personal approval of the resolution of important cases, especially those involving drugs and smuggling cases. In Gonzalez's own words: "If it is a drug or smuggling case, if the punishment is more than five years, and you dismiss a case of that nature, you must get my imprimatur."

Under questioning, however, state prosecutors like Jules Rosales described a work culture where the justice secretary's circular providing for automatic review was either honored in the breach or interpreted laxly.

This confusing state of affairs allows a state prosecutor to act on the assumption that a resolution signed by the chief state prosecutor is effective immediately even while it is pending automatic review.

None of this is to say that the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's performance is flawless, and that therefore every single arrest it makes must end in conviction. But the many loopholes in DOJ processes help explain why the burden of responsibility, in this high-profile case, rests largely on the Department of Justice.

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# Lucid plea, bum joke

**VIEWPOINT**

*Juan L. Mercado*

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO compelled many with his five 2009 statement: a lucid plea for aid in prisons. The Philippines has a "genological monstrosity...that is a throwback to the 18th century," a United Nations study earlier concluded. "It was built for punishment, not rehabilitation."

Jeanie did expect Puno to expand on his revealing statement that "Teacher Emma and Christine of Iraq's were always given fun." He was then badgering Bureau of Prisons Chief—the current President Joseph Estrada—to swallow a plunder conviction in exchange for pardon. Solidly laughed.

Puno's call to make overcrowded jails more humane is overdue. In 2001, about 33,000 prisoners fought for space in those jails. By 2003, the prison population count stood 114,000. Each inmate is cramped into 0.26 sq m of space—far below the 3 sq m set by the 1966 Minimum Standard for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Two-three second inmates who take turns in sleeping," says Mario Claver, dean who ministers to prisoners in the Cebu prisons. "Thus resulting spreads diseases like TB—and the stench."

Today, "prison conditions (remain) inhuman, unsanitary, unsafe, and overcrowded," the new UN State Department report on human Practices notes. "Daily subsistence allowance (is) approximately (40) per prisoner. Lack of potable water and poor ventilation cause health problems. The diets in detention centers are inadequate and poor."

"There were reports of widespread corruption...within the prison system," the report adds. Only (91) out of 1,078 jails managed by the BJMP and PNP had separate cells for minors, while 140 jails had separate cells for adult females."

To such a setting, "there is no event but one," Dante Wilde wrote. And prisoners "measure time by the flesh of pain and the sound of bitter memories."

Many handcuffed to the nightmare never made it home for lucky hosts as did Puno's favorite ex-con. They are prisoners obsolete. One pathetic prisoner—ordinary men and women who fractured the law, but lack the clout and cash of Erap, Jalosjos, Sarmiento et al. They languish in a gulag like network that denies them even whatever rehabilitation and a meaningful life" after imprisonment.

Prisoners' identities are voiceless and faceless. They grab attention only when they stage a jail break. There are rare exceptions. Cebu provincial prisoners' innovative dance routines played to TV5's world-wide audiences. But local officials use them public funds for themselves, rarely for prisoners. The saying "I was in prison and you visited Me" brings blank stares.

Beyond documented shortfalls in facilities haunts the need for a system that seeks to give a second chance, rather than punishment. The most credible Puno repeatedly hammers at on this issue: Addressing the Fourth Annual Conference of the Child Protection Unit Network, Chief Justice Reynato Puno noted, "The Juvenile Justice Network (reports) that 16,000 Filipino children are arrested and detained each year. The Philippine Human Rights Information Center found that 20,000 children are in jails mixed with hardened criminals. The Save the Children Foundation also has statistics showing that in 2002, more than half of the children in Southern Mindanao prisons were sexually abused and suffered from psychological harm. Some girls had been raped and some boys sodomized."

"BJMP established two detention centers exclusively for women," the UN report noted. More than 1,300 minor inmates were transferred to government and NGO shelters. This headed the new Juvenile Justice and Welfare Law. President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order 264 to "fast-track" implementation. But how fast is fast? The BJMP had released only 30 minor inmates by year's end. That line narrowed more.

"The bureaucracy is mobilized," says Fr. Shay Cullen who tirelessly works to spring kids who have been trafficked or had a break with the law. But jubilant official effort under a strand of Governor Chief Supt. Yolanda Taniguer, based in Camp Crame, "proved a big help in pushing the police to cooperate with us in saving children and bringing the criminals and rapists to justice."

Preda Foundation, which Cullen heads, succeeded in closing down the Cadel Youth Detention Center after it documented child abuse and torture by guards. "The population there is down from 145 two years ago to just 40 today. The courts gave Preda custody of several boys (for) Cadel.

"Three children gave their recorded accounts of brutal beatings and sub-human conditions: bonking on torture and show pictures that show what they endured," Cullen says. He invites those interested to view prison set selfies at www.preda.org. Their stories about the sensitivities of life behind bars is powerful.

Preda lawyers get courts to license into cases of crimes supposedly committed by the minors. "We've a clear record they have a chance of a better future."

The lawyers defend trafficked youngsters, skills training continues. Citizens provide scholarships for kids. Supported by Irish Aid, Preda's human rights education team strengthens local district councils for the protection of children and women.

The world sees a model for other countries now confronted by official sludge. The country's Number One Fa-Con, meanwhile, says he is considering running for the presidency in 2010.

"I hand out that complete phrase," a visiting political science professor asked Atenean columnist Antonio Isbrat.

*(E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com)*

# The most important thing

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

I REMEMBER A JOKE SOMEONE TOLD ME once: A couple who couldn't have a child sought the advice of a doctor. The doctor gave them all sorts of fertility pills and prescribed a regimen of diet and exercise guaranteed to bring about the desired effect. At the end of six months, they still could not produce a child, and so they went back to the doctor.

The doctor ruled off the items he had prescribed to them, and the couple said yes to all of them. The doctor was dismayed and confirmed the case to just had lush or bad genes. Then, just as the couple was about to go away, the doctor asked: "By the way, how often do you have sex?"

The couple answered, "What is that?"

I remembered that joke curiously enough in connection with Charter change. The House of Representatives is currently debating whether to effect it by way of con-ass or con-con, the administration representatives, like Davao Congressman Prospero Nograles, say it's too late for con-ass. The latter lack is a constitutional convention where members should be elected in the regular 2010 election of 2013. This lets the rattle of many easily passed through the Senate, which is sure to oppose con-ass or any attempt to extend term limits.

But change the Constitution we must, they say. Ortega, who was himself a con-con delegate in 1971, says he is not averse to con-ass "as long as we achieve the constitutional reforms we need."

My question remains: Why change the Constitution at all?

The explanations from the con-con of 1971 were equally nonsensical. The call for changing the Constitution itself did not come from Marcos but from the academe who wanted to change "colonial document" into one that would truly make the country free (from "US imperialism") and democratic (from the "oligarchs").

Looking back, you have to wonder if that wasn't quite right. From the beginning, Marcos' one was doomed. Despite all sorts of safeguards to make sure the elections would be "non-political," or would not be an extension of dynastic politics, a law expressly banning those running people related by several degrees of affinity or consanguinity to current officials, most of the schemes turned out to be extensions of existing political dynasties. The con-con also became a group of Young Turks...Raul Roco, Bobbit Tumbar, Steve Pimentel, etc.—for the bulk of it was none of the same.

Whether the 1971 Constitution could have wrought dramatic changes on the country or not is a moot point. Marcos declared martial law and himself wrought a dramatic—and profoundly tragic—change upon the country. He manufactured his own Constitution, after jailing 31 of the Young and Not-So-Very-Young Turks, and he kept that for remaining, and much longer, to reward, con-con delegates. Though he was a stickler for the Constitution and referred to it at every turn, even calling martial law "constitutional authoritarianism," nobody really paid any attention to it. It might as well not have been there.

The 1987 Constitution also created havoc expectations. It was produced in the first place to make martial law, or dictatorial rule, impossible in future, "never again" being the cry of that day. The new Constitution did manage to delete the draconian portions of the one it replaced, which allowed absolute power to the chief executive. It did manage to restore liberal democracy, or the kind of democracy we knew before martial law, good and bad, as the country has it didn't do much else. Certainly, it did not stop the rape and the pillage and the human rights abuses, all of which flourished under its effective dispensation. And today we're right back where we started, or where the con-con of 1971 started: faced with the ambitions of an unscrupulous ruler to keep power. The dictatorial rule is there already, albeit disguised in robes not unlike "constitutional authoritarianism." "Never again!" has become "Again and again!"

That brings me to the connection between the joke above and Charter change. It's quite simply this: We do not have sex and you cannot produce. We have a baby, unless you are God and can induce immaculate conception. Even Jesus had sex with Leda to produce Helen, though it's a wonder why any woman would consent to do it with a swan, but that's another story. You do not follow the Constitution, and you take out gung-ho hose changes, unless you have a Moscow-sized lightning bolt in your direction when you go astray. The Constitution is just lovable piffle and a regiment of diet and exercise, the act is obeying it, practicing it, embodying it.

The Constitution is not just a piece of paper, it is something that constitutes. It means nothing if it is found only in a glass encased document. It means something only when it is found in our sleeves, in our lifeblood, in our hearts and minds.

The Constitution is not the problem, we are the problem. Because there seems to be no visible connection between producing a Constitution and obeying it. Just like for us there seems no visible connection between holding forum hearings on corruption and punishing the guilty. Positioning a constitution and holding senate hearings on corruption ends in themselves. Whether it's the colonial 1935 Constitution, the discredited 1971 Constitution, the abrogated 1973 Constitution, the reformist 1987 Constitution, or the brave new Constitution of 2013 or 2016, none of it is going to matter one whit unless we, the people, are willing to stop the money extractions of presidential contenders, unless we are willing to stop the rape and pillage, unless we are ready determined to never make dictatorship happen again.

Then, let us endorse the law, then let us change it.

Everything else is just trying to make a baby without the most joyful part of it.

# Personal relations interfere with good governance

THE FACT THAT a PERSIST LAWYER WAS ABLE to draft a letter of release for his three young clients accused of drug dealing using Department of Justice stationery and under the financial eye of an undersecretary and that it landed on the justice secretary's desk might raise eyebrows in many countries. In the Philippines, but here is seen perfectly understandable, given the prevailing culture of interpersonal relations. Lawyer Ishmael Ahmad, whom I knew as an active participant in the Edsa Revolution, and Justice Undersecretary Hernando Perez—who facilitated the dispatch of the letter to the secretary's office, was a student of Ateneo. These interpersonal dealings are probably not unique to our country in the world, but living with good governance, except that they are probable fewer pronounced here, given our tempers more as a people. Needless to say, the situation has to change and tomorrow is not soon to be too.

* * *

Bangko Sentral Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. predicts that OFW remittances for 2009 would be $17 billion, an indication of the underlying resilience of foreign exchange inflows generated by OFWs despite the deepening global financial turmoil. The OFW remittance program remains the pillar of BP economic stability and former Speaker Jose de Venecia is credited by many as the father of the program. Incidentally, his biography, "Global Filipino," JDV narrates how he came to conceptualize it in the late 1980s, while assigned as minister-counselor at the Philippine Embassy in Saigon during the Cambodian refugee crisis. He also pointed that dollar-denominated checks of Filipinos working in US hours all over the Pacific and in continental United States and Canada were merely being remitted to their banks in the Philippines. In fact, when it could be flowing into the banking system and strengthening our dollar reserves. Philippine-commercial banks until then didn't have dollar deposits. He wrote President Ferdinand Marcos about it and the latter, in turn, made the young diplomat sit down with members of the Monetary Board and instruct him to draft a letter of release for his three young clients accused of drug dealing using Department of Justice stationery and under the financial eye of an undersecretary and that it landed on the justice secretary's desk might raise eyebrows in many countries. In the Philippines, but here is seen perfectly understandable, given the prevailing culture of interpersonal relations. Lawyer Ishmael Ahmad, whom I knew as an active participant in the Edsa Revolution, and Justice Undersecretary Hernando Perez—who facilitated the dispatch of the letter to the secretary's office, was a student of Ateneo. These interpersonal dealings are probably not unique to our country in the world, but living with good governance, except that they are probable fewer pronounced here, given our tempers more as a people. Needless to say, the situation has to change and tomorrow is not soon to be too.

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**POLITICAL TIDBITS**

*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

department heads Inc. as JDV reminisced, nothing is easy when money is involved. The next step was to convince American officials to agree to repatriate the dollar checks to BP blocking with them in Washington, DC so that that 10 percent of the foreign exchange income of Communist China at that time—through the Hong Kong backdoor, those same BK banks would be used by Beijing to finance communist regimes across Asia, such as those in North Vietnam and Laos as well as the fledgling Philippine insurgency.

* * *

The Americans were convinced, and President Richard Nixon gave the go-signal. An interesting sidelight: when JDV was briefing Nixon along with Ali. John S. McCain Jr., then head of the US Pacific Command, who allowed him use of his phone in order to campaign for the remittance program among Filipino workers in various US states. Ali. McCain was then a POW in Hanoi. Cain sputtered over the fact that he could be making decisions in the conduct of the Vietnam war that would affect the very life of his son, Navy pilot John McCain III, who languished for six years in a Hanoi prison, severely tortured by the North Vietnamese (the younger McCain was released by Barack Obama in last November's election).

It is so interesting, if ironic, that on July 8, 2008, Dr. Ateneo was finally decorated for his remittance program by the BSP (the very institution that almost succeeded in killing it. But this columnist remembers that day for something else. While he was at BSP, JDV learned that the opposition led by Cardinal Aquino had just called for the resignation of President Marcos. Right away, with the help of his political officer Mary Anne Sobejana, JDV called various House colleagues and rallied them, which explicitly provides that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people in a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

* * *

"All it was that in Edsa's Mansion in the Cory stated that the right in a balanced and healthful ecology need not even be written in the Constitution for it is assumed, like other civil and political rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, nonetheless it needs to be emphasized in view of the clear and constitutional importance with intergenerational implications. Even assuming the absence of a categorical legal provision specifically providing petitioners in claim up the tag, they and the courts and executive officials cannot deny petitioners' right to protect their generation or to protect generations of Filipinos to keep the waters of Manila Bay clean and clear as humanly as possible. Anything less would be a betrayal of the trust reposed in them."

* * *

In a statement to lawyers, Oposa filed a case to the 1980s "on behalf of the children and the future generations" against Environment Secretary Fulgencio Factoran to cancel all logging concessions. He wrote that landmark case.

Oposa has been given up on corporate lawyering and countercases on the environment and nearby. He has written two big books, "Legal Arsenal for the Philippine Environment" and "The Law of Nature and Other Stories." He is busy preserving the Tubbataha Reefs, now one of the richest marine areas in the world, and holds environment camps in Bantayan Island in Cebu where he built the School of the Seas. He wrote a cover story on the life journey and vision of that man for the Sunday Inquirer Magazine (now defunct for 20 years ago.)

By early as 2007, Oposa said, there was 30-1132 issued by President Ferdinand Marcos prohibiting that cutting of trees except for clearing up by the government. After People Power, he said, among the cases in Cherie Tan moved in with a detective family. Ben Christian Commission in rural areas began to grow with a repentance for being the Catholic version of communist cells. Which branched the anti-Marcos movement for the disappearance, even as the ravages of the insurgent war in Mindanao continued on.

In 1985, taking a cue from Ninoy Aquino's assassination, the progressive Bishop Jaime Sin proposed the creation of [illegible] an eight-member national council composed of four representatives from within and outside the government. The was the opening act as of the Church's effort to steer the treadmills leaves of change into peaceful and orderly channels.

The cardinal's call was echoed by the Bishop's Businessmen's Conference for Human Development. Other groups, such as Bandilag, soon took up the challenge. By 1986, Sin was ready to declare "enough is enough" and "Marcos must go" and "without resignation"—which impelled an assembly of bishops to a motion asking Marcos to resign.

The ranks of other organizations packed up. Their meetings began to have with talk of Marcos' resignation. Even the powerful Makati Business Club (Chamber of Commerce) raised in November 1985.

Middle-rank executives and employees joined demonstrations during office hours in view the sympathies of their superiors, who joined them. By October, yellow confetti was raining from office windows, as executives and office workers marched along Ayala Avenue in Makati. The Church began its "bells and prayers" campaign: at 6 p.m. every day, church bells would ring, and the middle class, an up and forward. It was time to make contingency plans in case Marcos fell.

Protestant groups began to rally against Marcos in 1978.

By 1978, Sin was firmly on the path to his pronounce role in the overthrow of Marcos. Inspired by the Pope's message to safeguard human rights and advance moral justice, religious and lay activists worked with more courage among the poor. Cherie Tan moved in with a detective family. Ben Christian Communities in rural areas began to grow with a repentance for being the Catholic version of communist cells. Which branched the anti-Marcos movement for the disappearance, even as the ravages of the insurgent war in Mindanao continued on.

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# Revolutionary SC ruling on Manila Bay (1)

THE SUPREME COURT HAS SPOKEN, AND SO it will hopefully come to pass that the famed but severely polluted Manila Bay will once again restore to life, be restored to its former pristine glory, and be safe for swimming, skiing and the like. People will once again have to pay subways and baths in its waters without fear, with only the sense of wonder and awe and the ordinary that something, at last, is right.

The Supreme Court's continuing mandamus, a hard-earned one that means nothing until the same gets apart of the patriotic Filipinos. Like environmental lawyer Antonio Oposa who did his quixotic part to use the law as a weapon to save that historic waterway from total death. Like the MMDA.

Shortly before Christmas last month, the Court issued a ruling penned by Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr. that upheld the previous rulings of the lower courts on the 1999 petition of a group of citizens compel government agencies and local governments to clean up Manila Bay and restore it to its healthy state. Among the petitioners were Oposa's students in the UP College of Law and his youngest son, who was then a little boy. Include the Concerned Residents of Manila Bay, a multisectoral mailing master list of the Bay Oposa acted as counsel, spent time, money and energy to pursue the case even after the petitioners had graduated.

And now with the SC justices speaking mostly unanimously and with finality in their high perch, Manila Bay can claim the case it deserves and those who defy be damned.

Ecstatic, the Harvard-trained Oposa could not contain himself and wanted people, "I cry no tears! No dance," he told me. "Today, I hit my head on the lamp post. But sometimes I am able to soar into the skies, and maybe, for a moment, touch the face of God."

Saying before the SC in the case was, to Oposa, his "finest moment" as an environmental lawyer.

The victory is more than symbolic for the ruling is final and executory. You cannot defy the Court, Oposa said. As of yesterday, a commission was be-

**HUMAN FACE**

*Ma. Ceres P. Doyo*

ing formed to monitor implementation of the ruling and to refine regular reports to the Court. Oposa has invited members of the Philippine Marine Corps and the integrated Bar of the Philippines and other "green" individuals to be part of the monitoring team. He credits the Rotary Club of Manila for its support.

Ordered by the Court to implement are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as lead agency, the local governments of Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Bataan, Bulacan and Pampanga, and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the Manila Bay Coordinating Office, the Philippine Coast Guard, the Philippine National Police Maritime Group, the Philippine Ports Authority, the Local Water Utilities Authority, Inc.

The Court ordered all of them, "to live with the principle of continuing mandamus, shall, from finality of this Decision, each submit to the Court a quarterly progressive report of the activities undertaken in accordance with this Decision."

The SC justices unanimously decreed that Manila Bay had a total coliform count of about 1 million MPN. The safe figure is 500 MPN. Oposa pointed out, "What kind of people are we? In other countries they make a showcase of a body of water while here we make it a dumping ground."

The Court ordered Republic Act 9003 and called it "a sweeping piece of legislation enacted to radically transform and improve solid waste management. It implements Sec. 16, Art. II of the 1987 Constitution, which explicitly provides that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people in a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

"As it was that in Edsa's Mansion in the Cory stated that the right in a balanced and healthful ecology need not even be written in the Constitution for it is assumed, like other civil and political rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, nonetheless it needs to be emphasized in view of the clear and constitutional importance with intergenerational implications. Even assuming the absence of a categorical legal provision specifically providing petitioners in claim up the tag, they and the courts and executive officials cannot deny petitioners' right to protect their generation or to protect generations of Filipinos to keep the waters of Manila Bay clean and clear as humanly as possible. Anything less would be a betrayal of the trust reposed in them."

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Oposa has been given up on corporate lawyering and countercases on the environment and nearby. He has written two big books, "Legal Arsenal for the Philippine Environment" and "The Law of Nature and Other Stories." He is busy preserving the Tubbataha Reefs, now one of the richest marine areas in the world, and holds environment camps in Bantayan Island in Cebu where he built the School of the Seas. He wrote a cover story on the life journey and vision of that man for the Sunday Inquirer Magazine (now defunct for 20 years ago.)

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In 1985, taking a cue from Ninoy Aquino's assassination, the progressive Bishop Jaime Sin proposed the creation of [illegible] an eight-member national council composed of four representatives from within and outside the government. The was the opening act as of the Church's effort to steer the treadmills leaves of change into peaceful and orderly channels.

The cardinal's call was echoed by the Bishop's Businessmen's Conference for Human Development. Other groups, such as Bandilag, soon took up the challenge. By 1986, Sin was ready to declare "enough is enough" and "Marcos must go" and "without resignation"—which impelled an assembly of bishops to a motion asking Marcos to resign.

The ranks of other organizations packed up. Their meetings began to have with talk of Marcos' resignation. Even the powerful Makati Business Club (Chamber of Commerce) raised in November 1985.

Middle-rank executives and employees joined demonstrations during office hours in view the sympathies of their superiors, who joined them. By October, yellow confetti was raining from office windows, as executives and office workers marched along Ayala Avenue in Makati. The Church began its "bells and prayers" campaign: at 6 p.m. every day, church bells would ring, and the middle class, an up and forward. It was time to make contingency plans in case Marcos fell.

# The Church and political change

RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION PAID JUST BEGINning at the onset of martial law. The Catholic hierarchy had only just addressed in 1971 Vatican II's "Gaudium et Spes," which virtually delineated the Catholic commitment to social justice. " Fr. Fred-ric ORR, S.J. delivered his "Prayer for the Nation" at the opening of Congress. It climaxed to a session "on the trembling edge of revolution."

After his speech, students in the streets flung a paper mache crocodile at the First Couple as they stepped out of Congress. Like the students, mothers' groups were heard from the religious revolution until many years later.

In 1974 Archbishop Jaime Sin [who was soon to be elevated to cardinal] replaced Rufino Cardinal Santos as archbishop of Manila. Sin was known for his activities on social issues and his business acumen. Sin was not a firebrand when he donned the red sap, but he would change.

Martial order, that "[s]ovenge and compassion are not words to be found in the dictionary when a police learned of the arrest without charge or the bad use of a behavioral [sic] witness."

"And when dissidents and condemn injustice or protest torture, and their activities were halted by the military, the Church and the religious in the exercise functions of ministry were constrained. Those concerned were rounded even by the conservative when government tried to control the progressive by threatening taxation of Church schools or passage of [illegible] laws."

The distance from the government spread to the Protestants, a group which "had also been strongly committed to constitutional democracy, having its roots in the American democratic ethic.

Of the major churches, only the Iglesia ni Cristo was quiescent. Its radicalization had been assaulted by government troops at the center of martial law. It registered its displeasure with Marcos as late as 1978 with a resounding no in a referendum. There was no [illegible] to speed up in the regime [unlimited]...as in Iqbal.

Catholic leaders would remain divided over the

**THE LONG VIEW**

*Manuel L. Quezon III*

best way to deal with Marcos until the eve of Edsa. They resisted over the radicalization of the insurgent religious. But the most effective catalyst for change among the senior prelates was government provocation.

Iloi's case was a good example. One of his first acts as archbishop of Manila was to issue a pastoral letter condemning the summary arrest of two activist priests, Fathers Rudy Romano and Jose Blanco. They were arrested in a raid on the Sacred Heart Seminary in Novaliches in 1974. Sin presided over a prayer vigil for the detained priests, "which more than 5,000 persons attended, the largest anti-martial law protest at the time."

In 1975, Sin declared his opposition to a Marcos decree "banning all labor strikes." US President Gerald Ford was visiting Manila, so Marcos lent a harsh retort and confined the prohibition to strategic industries.

The harassment continued. Church-owned media, which had escaped closure in 1972, was shut down in 1974-75, among them the weekly newspaper and radio station of Bishop Francisco Claver's diocese in Bukidnon. Bishop's radio station and Church publications in Davao. The government threatened to tax Church properties and subject them to urban land reform.

Iloi's policy of "critical collaboration" during the time began to give way to active resistance, as the religious hierarchy spread over the countryside activists, and those of the clergy became radicalized. Sin may have thought to steal the thunder from the radical priests by leading the Iloilo himself.

Protestant groups began to rally against Marcos in 1978.

By 1978, Sin was firmly on the path to his pronounce role in the overthrow of Marcos. Inspired by the Pope's message to safeguard human rights and advance moral justice, religious and lay activists worked with more courage among the poor. Cherie Tan moved in with a detective family. Ben Christian Communities in rural areas began to grow with a repentance for being the Catholic version of communist cells. Which branched the anti-Marcos movement for the disappearance, even as the ravages of the insurgent war in Mindanao continued on.

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# 'Kolgirl'

IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE TERMS "QA," "QUEEning," "EOP," "NOC," "MIS," "wind," then you are one of us, the thousands of "millions" and "kolgirls" in the Philippines.

We belong to the sleep-deprived, sunrise-inhaling, call-taking new breed of Filipino youth. We colour our sunrises caffeinated wires with nervous milieu every day so that we won't be "NCNS" (no-call, no-show) for our next shift. Sometimes running across our path.

Confession? Well, if your idea of glamour is staggering down Ortigas Avenue wearing Pants Ribbon shades at 8 in the morning, looking dog tired while everybody else looks fresh and new, then we are the kings and queens of glamour.

Bohemian? Ha ha! We follow a very rigid schedule. We

continued on page 2

**YOUNG BLOOD**

*Pamela*

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

We went to some what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

Pamela, 28, is a single mother who works as a call center agent, a job that pays her enough to splurge on manga books, karaoke joys, rendezvous and Marlboro reds. She has a generous health card that takes care of her dental visits, HIV and MRI, paid for by her call center company, which she thinks is the source of her migraine and headache.

# Silence

*Janina Mae B. Tecson*

LISTEN. THERE COMES A POINT IN YOUR LIFE WHEN ALL you can do is listen. You can't seem to find the right words to say, because there are no right words to say at that particular moment. I know that because of our great desire to comfort some people that I have said some absurd, feel-like-telling-them-things we think could ease their pain. But sometimes, all we can and need to do is hear them out and keep silent.

I realized this when my closest friend was crushed by heartbreak and I did not know what to do. I felt really bad. I felt useless and helpless. I tried very hard to think of some words to let her know that I was there for her, no matter what I say to make her feel better. But all my effort proved frustrating. When a person is faced with a great heartbreak, even if you tell him/her things he/she wants and need to hear, he/she end the hitting reality will not listen.

So I decided to keep silent and listen to her. I told her that if she needed to talk her study every day, I won't get tired of listening to it. As for me, all I know was that she needed to pour her heart out and let all her suppressed emotions come out. Keeping silent was a lot awkward, but I thought it was better than pretending I knew better. And I know that she knew it too. I did not tell her to let everything out right away. I just assured her that I was there to listen whenever she was ready.

Silence is not bad when the occasion calls for it. We do not need to say something all the time in order to help and show someone that we care. It is not every day that there is something our need to say and share. And it is not all the time that we have to find the right words to sound sympathetic or apologetic. Sometimes, silence is the best answer.

We need not pretend to be all-knowing by telling our loved ones all the things they need to hear in a certain time. We need not pretend that we totally understand what they are going through. We need not assure them that everything is going to be fine. We just have to stay with them, period.

Sometimes, just listening is more often not appreciated, but it has been proven to be effective. Silence does not always mean you are apathetic. Silence also means you choose not to say anything because you do not want to complicate things and make the situation worse. Silence is another way of saying, "Tell me everything and I won't judge you. I'm here for you, and I will be here for you." Silence is a very important tool than anything. And that is often more than enough.

Janina Mae B. Tecson, 21, is in her first year at the Ateneo Law School of Law.

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# Global community needs a real parliament in UN

MOST PEOPLE, EVEN IF NOT, as Wilhelm Wilde Blankets Caroline Inman and Pope Benedict have recently observed, that global problems require global solutions. For this to happen, we require two things: a change in our conscious sense so that we recognize the earth's resources are finite, and more effective international institutions that can keep us from destroying each other and the environment.

The UN must be strengthened so that it becomes more than a talk shop, and has the resources to fulfill the great responsibilities it bears for peace, development and social justice. One idea is to give citizens and not just nations direct input into the system. Europe now has its own Parliament and there could be one at the United Nations too.

The Campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly (detailed at www.unpacampaign.org) proposes a consultative body, first nominated of national parliamentarians, that transitions to direct elections in the same way that the European Parliament did. The world is now a global community and we need democratic global institutions that reflect the new reality.

A Parliamentary Assembly at the United Nations would be a symbol of a new global consciousness, a force for further reform, and a way for the world to start working together right now for the common interest.

**—LARRY KATSOS**
*Vice president,*
*World Federalist Movement-Canada Vancouver Branch,*
*#203, 33 Ave,*
*Vancouver B.C. Canada*

LETTERS

## SSS saved in the nick of time

DATING FOR THE SECOND TIME that it was a mistake joining Edsa II Omicron, (12/29/08), former President Cory Aquino curiously meant that she did not believe in the conviction for plunder of ex-president Joseph "Erap" Estrada by the Sandiganbayan in 2007. This makes us conclude that the heroine of Edsa I was not aware that had Estrada stayed longer in Malacañang, we, millions of Social Security System (SSS) pensioners and members, would not have been saved in the nick of time from eventually losing our funds.

From the formula ere debacle, it took three-SSS President Corazon dela Paz five years to rebuild the pension fund so that by the end of the fifth year, all SSS pensioners were able to get an increase of 10 percent after the four years.

"Erap is making things for the hard-up!" was a statement because, as non-observant-seem, the hard-up pensioners were pleased with his administration. Of so many yes he could have easily dipped his fingers in, the pension funds of the poor became a target.

Again, our five women presidents did not know that Malacañang, as painted in the papers not only from but also ahead, becomes a mighty cage to evade meaning) drinking rendezvous where a Filipino-Canadian survivor, who incidentally was a member of the presidential staff, came out unscathed to tell the story of all those who are gathering of foreign correspondents.

Despite the six-year hearing of the plunder case where incontestable evidence was presented and which resulted in Estrada's conviction, many still believe that Estrada was innocent. Die of Oasis, apparently, is the ex-president. But Sunday, in Edsa II, there was no pushing by anybody, not even by Jaime Cardinal Sin, to have Estrada's ex-mistress Laarni Enriquez Chein was unified participation in that historic event.

As a would-be victim of Erap's inconsistencies, being an SSS pensioner saved only in the nick of time, I think I have the right to ask: Is I am sorry I have to write this piece.

**—RICARDO R. SALGADO**
**bel_gllvr@yahoo.com**

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) of Rizal Ave. cor. San Jose Road, Zamboanga City, invites all duly accredited and interested contractors to participate in the pre-qualification and to bid for the following item, to wit:

One (1) Lot. LABOR/CIVIL/CONSTRUCTION & INSTALLATION WORKS FOR 69KV/13.8KV SUBSTATION PROJECT

Contract Identification: (1) unique item, to read as:

A. For turnkey contractors: substation materials and installation equipment

High Voltage Network: complete with transformer, switchgear, control house, and 69/13.8 kV substation

Low voltage network: complete with transformer, switchgear, control house, and 13.8/0.4 kV substation

Distribution network: complete with transformer, switchgear, control house, and 13.8/0.4 kV substation

B. For substation contractors and substation equipment

High Voltage Network: complete with transformer, switchgear, control house, and 69/13.8 kV substation

Low voltage network: complete with transformer, switchgear, control house, and 13.8/0.4 kV substation

C. For Offline Meter Monitoring

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

# Body, mind, soul and 'hilot'

By Marice Cinco
Bay, Laguna

STRIPPED OF AMULETS AND charms but armed with the principle that "an illness of the body is an illness of the spirit," Nossi del Mundo believes healing must be a holistic cure of body, mind and soul.

"[When] you are sick[,] you are longing for somebody. It means you are disconnected. And unknowingly you are looking for God—not in theory but in experience," explains the 50-year-old "manghihilot" (traditional healer) who has been studying the indigenous art of healing since 1989.

In 2002, Del Mundo founded the Hilot Pinoy (Philippine traditional healing) which combines orthodox and natural healing. "A movement of spirit-filled people" is how she describes its over 300 practitioners.

Telesanar (Healer to Every Home) program aims to bring this wellness technology to poor communities.

*The Hilot Pinoy may be contacted at* [illegible] *or* [illegible] *It offers regular services at Hotel Club 400 resort in Bay, Laguna, and home services in Metro Manila.*

HERBAL Tanicuta, one of the treatments offered by the Hilot Pinoy, is an ancient cupping therapy in which warmed glasses are used to suck out toxins or "luma" to improve the body's blood circulation.

Panasonic
PABX Telephone System
• Call Transfer
• Music On Hold
• Call Privacy
• Intercom
INFINITE SYSTEMS 893-9073 to 77

## Holistic

Among the many methods of traditional healing, Del Mundo distinguishes hers by employing an integrated modality "of healing the spirit, mind and body." Healing to her begins by "breaking through" the barriers of physical body and mind.

"It is that simple awareness that there is someone who has greater powers than you—the Divine, parents or yourself," she says.

Del Mundo demonstrates how "breakthrough" is achieved in a simple exercise at the start of the healing session. "You have to first focus and surrender yourself and your wants to God."

"But is not easy, she says, as negative and worldly thoughts such as busy schedules, bills to pay and things to buy would unconsciously enter their way. "Mind is the battleground of good and evil. [But] by breathing and concentrating on entering your breath from your in-ten, your gains control over the mind and do away with other thoughts."

Patients are set off in a dreamless sleep through the "dagdag," a native foot reflexology that also diagnoses illnesses in the head, arms, thoracic area, abdomen, spine, pelvic and reproductive organ and sometimes through reflex points.

The brief but deep dose helps them regain connection with God [and] they dread up "that intense desire to be cured."

"That's the big difference," Del Mundo said. According to her, massage parlors are simply for relaxation, while medical treatment is fragmented as it caters only the physical body.

"Hilot is a gift from God. Anyone, with the sincere desire to cure or be cured can be a healer," she adds.

## Turning point

A former marketing agent, Del Mundo made the sudden shift in life when her newly born grandchild suffered from severe asthma. "I prayed to the Lord to make him well and I promised I would serve Him," she recounts.

It was then she decided to make it her mission to help people reconnect with God through hilot.

The Hilot Pinoy has cured a lot of people with illnesses such as psoriasis or even cancer, Del Mundo says.

Del Mundo graduated from an alternative medicine school, the St. Francis Divine College in Quezon City. She incorporated indigenous and natural medicine and traditional healing methods that trace back to pre-Hispanic times.

"We don't compete with medicine, we complement it," Del Mundo clarifies. Those with serious illnesses are advised to see their doctors.

"Alternative medicine has various modalities, such as acupuncture, herbal medication, herbal foods, massage and others, and is differentiated from the present Western medicine," says Danilo Abeya, 69, her brick mate.

The group offers home service in Manila and has a healing spot in an eco-resort in Bay, Laguna.

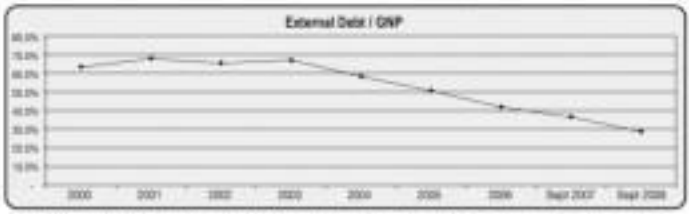
A basic session of three hours costs at least P600 and includes "dagdag," herbal "sauli" and harana. "Hilot sa gitnang" (spine), "saipit sa ugat" (sprain), "bulad" (lymph nodes), "tagilay na bulikat" (frozen shoulder) and prolapse uterus.

Cut de Jesus, 58, had excessive menstrual bleeding required her to have blood transfusion, but the Hilot Pinoy helped her avoid the medical treatment. She underwent Hilot for three consecutive months and took in probiotics until she regained her health.

Del Mundo's group has partnered with nongovernment organizations in holding training sessions. Its Hilot sa Barangay

# FOREIGN DEBT FALLS
## BY $1.3B IN 3rd QUARTER OF 2008

**External debt as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) declines by 7.9% year-on-year**




*Since 2005, external debt as a percentage of GNP has been on a downward trend indicating a sustained improvement in the Philippines' capacity to service its maturing foreign obligations.*

– Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

"When some governments were going deeper into debt, we were fiscally prudent, building up our reserves, investing in infrastructure, but paying our debts. These were not easy decisions. Together we did it because it needed to be done..."

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

# FILIPINOS WILL BENEFIT

* More money for schools, roads, irrigation and other infrastructure projects
* More confidence in dealing with the global economic crisis
* More funds available to help the poor and unemployed

Across the NATION

# Layoffs at Cebu export zone continue

By Bonnee Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—TWO more export companies at the Mactan Economic Zone (MEZ) have retrenched employees, displacing almost 300 workers.

Multiland Textile Ltd., a Hong Kong company, and Taiyo Yuden (Philippines) Inc., which produces spare parts for cellular phones, did not notify the labor department about the retrenchment but the two companies could have been hoarding from the global economic crisis since their clients are mostly based in the United States, said Fe Cabigon, administrative officer of the National Labor Relations Commission in Central Visayas (NLRC).

The retrenched workers camped at the NLRC in Cebu City on Monday and Tuesday to file complaints and signed documents against the management of the two firms, both located in MEZ 1 in Lapu-Lapu City.

Cabigon said at least 200 workers of Multiland Textile went to the NLRC on Monday claiming they were illegally dismissed by their company.

Sixty more workers from Multiland came to NLRC on Tuesday.

Fifteen workers of Taiyo Yuden also filed complaints of illegal dismissal against the company on Tuesday, Cabigon said.

**TWO WOMEN AND A BABY**
An Ifugao woman baby sits her grandchild in the tourist town of Banaue. Several Ifugao towns have put in place reproductive health programs to ensure the health and welfare of mothers and children. EDWIN BACASMAS/INQUIRER VISAYAS

## Redundancy

The management of the two companies were not available for comment yesterday. A call made to Multiland Textile was not answered, while the guard at Taiyo Yuden said all officials of the company have already left.

Cabigon said Multiland Textile workers were told by management on Monday that they were retrenched because of "redundancy" in their positions.

Cabigon said the workers' claims that they were not given separation pay and other benefits.

Labor advisers Julie Hernandez, Arnan Gandler and Bernadita Ap-ad will handle the complaints, according to Cabigon.

Last December, at least 150 workers of Automotive Rim Line Automotive also went to NLRC to file a complaint of illegal dismissal against management.

Last Monday, workers of furniture exporter Gardeni del Sole Manufacturing Corp. based in Mandaue City went to the Mactan Cebu International Medication Board (MCMB) to allow a complaint after the management did not allow them to return for work.

## No notice

Elias Eyaneng, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) regional director, said he was not formally informed of the latest retrenchments at MEZ and would immediately look into it.

"This [retrenchment] is alarming," he said.

Capturing earlier rare sighs of floods in Cebu, companies in MEZ is required to limit to minimal adopt other measures instead of retrenchment, like reducing the number of workdays in a week.

# CHEd installs new Mindanao university president

COTABATO CITY—THE Commission on Higher Education officially installed on Thursday Atanacio Bedja in Quezon City as president of the University of Southern Mindanao (USM).

Bedja, who won the presidency in a tight 6-5 vote against close rival, the incumbent USM vice president Felicia Antipuesto, has been accused by USM faculty and staff as "unfit" for the top post due to deficiencies and alleged irregularities in a 1989 arson-slashing case in Bukidnon town.

CHEd Chair Emmanuel Angeles, who swore in Bedja at the investiture of outgoing USM president Virgilio Oliva, said there was "no basis to stop the assumption of Doctor Bedja in reorientation because he was raised by the Board of Regents."

"He went through the selection process conducted by a committee," he said.

Earlier, Angeles ordered an investigation of the charges that the newly installed USM head falsified documents on the length of service he had as USM dean of veterinary medicine and his involvement in a case of rape that's due for trial soon. USM University members slaughtered nearly 18 years ago.

North Cotabato Rep. Gov. Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza and Pikkel, a USM alumnus, who sent a letter of resignation addressed to President Macapagal-Arroyo, said his vote on member should not be construed as favoring one from the other.

"Whenever it manifest should be cleared of charges and that's my only concern. I have no particular bet for the USM presidency," said Pikkel, who earlier asked authorities to look into the complaints.

In his letter to Mr. Bedja, a copy of which was given to Inquirer, Pikkel regarded the group's concerns as "legitimate and must be immediately addressed."

Bedja denied the charges in a radio interview in Bukidnon City on Monday. Oberlie C. Arbaiz, Inquirer Mindanao with Edmon Tendez in Manila

# Group says Sierra Madre illegal logging back

LUCENA CITY—WITH THE renewed illegal logging activities in Sierra Madre, a Church-based watchdog urged Environment Secretary Jesselito Atienza to head its long-promised drive for the formation of an independent citizen's investigation body to stop the rape of the country's remaining virgin forest.

"Illegal loggers were stopped even during the Feliciano season," Fr. Peter Mandal-lon, chair of Simbahan Sierra Madre, said over the phone Monday.

The priest claimed that volumes of illegally cut lumber produced were being shipped out of the mountains under the cloak of darkness with most of the Philippine National Police (PNP) marshaling through the mountains back door to Ermig, Real.

"We believe that this regulative cycle will only engulf [natural] loggers," Mandallon said.

Agta tribal leader Ramsey Atienza confirmed the return of illegal logging in Sierra Madre.

Quoting sources from lumberjacks and illegal logger themselves, Atienza told the Inquirer by phone that government officials and politicians were actively involved in the illegal forest activities.

He, however, declined to cite all the government officials.

"It's now up to the concerned government agencies to investigate. We're willing to help," he said.

With the mounting destruction

> "With the thundering noise from power saws, the herd of wild pigs has retreated..."

of the mountain's ecosystem, the Agta leader said they have less their traditional hunting grounds for wild boar.

"Catching one is now getting very difficult. With the disturbance from power saws, the herd of wild pigs has retreated to the inner bosom of the mountains," he said.

Mandallon said they were President Macapagal-Arroyo last December urging her to order the DENR to form the proposed Citizens' Independent Investigating Team with priests and environmentalists as members as opposed upon in a meeting in Malacañang last June.

He said those request has not been acted upon.

Italo Lorenzo, head of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in southern Quezon, dismissed the charges of corruption as irresponsible and baseless allegations.

"Our men are doing every thing to protect the environment despite the meager resources at our office. What we need now is the cooperation of all sectors and not that destructive and senseless blame-pointing," he said in a past phone interview. *With TJ MacLeod Jr. Inquirer Southern Luzon*

# Cebu aquaculture firm takes case to SC to keep 1.7-ha land

By Norman Bordadora

AN AQUACULTURE FIRM HAS filed a motion for reconsideration asking the Supreme Court second division to reverse an earlier ruling that nullified its land titles covering 1.7 hectares in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu.

In a 51-page pleading, Aquatech (Philippines), Inc., asked the second division to reverse its September 2008 resolution and second resolution declaring affirming the firm's ownership of the pieces of property reported to be worth P100 million.

The second division on Sept. 26, 2008 denied a petition for review that sought to reverse a Court of Appeals decision in favor of the heirs of a certain Maximino Bugsin in connection with the disputed property.

The appellate court, in a 2007 decision, said the CA also ordered the nullification and cancellation of Aquatech's TCTs 18422 and 18940 issued by the Register of Deeds of Lapu-Lapu City.

"In the end, all the petitioner prays for is that this honorable Court carefully examines the facts, carefully applies the proper laws and jurisprudences in their appropriate perspective and in accordance with basic justice, and hopefully, arrives at a more consequent decision to ensure that no constitutional right, no injustice and no law or jurisprudence has been transgressed...," Aquatech said in its motion.

The first court, the second division failed to indicate the legal and factual basis behind its denial of the petition. It maintained that its arguments warranted the reversal of the CA decision.

"The CA arbitrarily resolved the complaint of respondents heirs of Maximino Bugsin et al. on the merits by nullifying and directing the cancellation of [Aquatech's titles] — reddening Aquatech's lawful title and ownership of the disputed property," the firm said.

"The CA not only went beyond the bounds of the law but even committed another grave error analogous to the supreme law of the land against [the] evidence of property without due process of law," it added.

Aquatech pointed out that, as early as 1975, the SC had established certain portions of the property from water to land based in fact as part of "soil which decisions have not been questioned by the government since 1975 and until the present, such that no reasonable conclusion can be had that the government has already recognized the title of the private ownership and title of the transferees."

The CA decision was penned by Associate Justice Francisco Pascual of CA's Cebu Station, 18th Division.

# Baguio-based electronics firm to axe more workers

BAGUIO CITY—TEXAS Instruments Philippines Inc. (TIpi) is expected to axe more employees in a second wave of layoffs, which would have an impact on the 2009 growth scenario for the summer capital and the rest of the Cordillera.

This was disclosed by Jane Ngalob, Cordillera director of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) in a news conference here on Wednesday.

TIpi was the first American-led firm to "bite the bullet," when it announced an early retirement program for its employees before the end of 2008, he said.

In December, TIpi officials advised the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that they had let go of 392 workers from different divisions, said Cordillera director Sina Dizon.

Ngalob's disclosure could not be confirmed with TIpi as calls to the company were unanswered.

A hundred more workers are due for reassignment to TIpi's new facility at the Clark Economic Zone, according to a company report sent to the government.

Beefing up Clark while TIpi pares down its manpower is the oldest plan, to Ngalob. "Easy for part of its strategy," Ngalob said.

Because of a 120-market shutdown, semiconductor firms that supply this market would logically take the brunt of the economic whole, he said.

Based on the company's latest advisory, the workers were retrenched. Although a few recalled in early retirement packages, Dizon said.

The workers were granted terminal leaves without pay in December, and some requesting to be paid their full retrenchment benefits next week, she said.

Dizon said she was not alarmed at yet another round of layoffs.

"We have not yet reached the numbers," Ngalob said. *With reports from Inquirer Northern Luzon*

# Cebu assistant prosecutor slain in ambush

By Bonnee Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—AN ASSISTANT city prosecutor in Cebu City died in a hospital after he was ambushed and shot twice by two unidentified men while he was driving his car along a busy city street on Tuesday afternoon.

Senior Supt. Heinrich Corbes, chief, city police office, said assistant prosecutor Patrick Ian Ouano died at past 3 p.m. yesterday.

He suffered several bullet wounds in the chest and head.

The Cebu City police is heading up the case handled by Ouano.

Consolidator, however, said he got some "important information" from Ouano's colleagues that might lead to the identity of the suspects.

Consolidator said they would prosecutor all the cases handled by the prosecutor.

Two other agencies—the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and National Bureau of Investigation—were helping in the investigation.

Chavez was driving his Toyota *Revo* home in Pagsabungan town, 13 km south of Cebu City, when he was ambushed by two motorcycle-riding men at 4:23 p.m. on Tuesday along Mc. Godfrey Street in Barangay Mambaling, which is only about 100 meters from the Mambaling police precinct.

He was shot in the belly.

The 36-year-old prosecutor was rushed by bystanders to the nearest hospital.

# New PSC tack for talent search

By Jane Manaros

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION has decided to give more priority in supporting talents from the grassroots for 2012Olympic sports.

Commissioner Eric Lorenzo said the PSC hopes to identify young prospects through a couple of multisport competitions and nurture them for possible inclusion to the national team.

Lorenzo added that the PSC will focus on sports where the country has a strong chance for a medal in the Olympics or pick at least 20 elite athletes from the 10 priority sports.

The 10 priority sports are aquatics, athletics, taekwondo, boxing, shooting, archery, weightlifting, fencing, judo and wrestling.

In terms of medal chances in the Olympics, taekwondo and boxing remain the top sports.

"We have to focus on those priority sports to maximize our resources," said Lorenzo, who earlier announced that the PSC has shifted its concentration from elite programs to grassroots development.

"We sincerely believe that the move to have elite sports under the care of the POC is beneficial," added Lorenzo.

Apart from the 10 priority disciplines, the PSC also hopes to tap potential national team athletes in triathlon, sailing/windsurfing, bowling, billiards, wushu, cycling and rowing.

Lorenzo said the future prospects for the national team will come from the returning frontrunners and the revival of the Batang Pinoy Games, among others.

Three athletes will get their baptism of fire in the Asian Youth Games this year and the 2010 Youth Olympics, both to be held in Singapore.

Lorenzo added that the Philippine Olympic Festival, the talent-identification program of the Philippine Olympic Committee, will also get ample support from the PSC.

HARBOUR Centre power forward Ron Holmes dives against the defense of Burger King's Mentor David Standley. This Boxing Day win, 91-83. PHOTO BY ROY DOMINGO

# Sparks battle Wizards; Hapee targets q'finals

By Cedelf P. Topas

LOUIE TRUMPETED AS A FORMER CHALlenger to Hardcore Carrier's reign, the Toyota Otis Sparks have found success few and far between in the PBL PG Pilot Limbocan Cup.

The Sparks try to end a mounting stretch of mediocrity when they take on the Magnolia Purewater Wizards today at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

Toyota Otis, which has not won a game in more than a month, is hard-pressed to end a three-game losing slump and reassertion its bid for a quarterfinal berth.

"It's a do-or-die game for us," said Toyota Otis coach Ariel Vanguardia. "This will test our true strength and character."

At No. 8 with a 3-6 card, the Sparks are just half a game ahead of sixth-ranked Burger King (3-7) and a full game in front of last place Pharex (2-7).

The team with the worst record misses the bus in the quarterfinals.

Hapee and Burger King meet in the first game at 1 p.m. with the Complete Protectors looking to humiliate their entry in the quarterfinals.

The Complete Protectors are fresh from a 76-72 stepping of the Wizards Tuesday thanks to Josh Vanhuizingbuen's late triple.

"We will have to do our job and try to win our last two games," said Hapee coach Gee Abanilla.

The Complete Protectors are still awaiting word from former Ateneo ace Otto Tho, who was supposed to join the team this month. Tho is still on vacation in the United States.

The Wizards are already assured of a semifinal slot, regardless of the outcome of today's game, owing to their better quotient against Hapee and Barako—the only teams with a chance of tying their record at the end of the eliminations.

Despite a one-sided first-round thumping that included La Salle's JV Cantonjos Jean Rizal University's James Sena and Letran's BJ Awal, the Sparks have yet to earn their one consolation win.

The last time the Sparks were win on Dec. 4 yet against Burger King, 87-77.

Dylan Abadeon, unsigned by his respective with the national developmental pool, Al Magpayo and former pro Neil Banzon will lead the Wizards.

The Complete Protectors are seeking a repeat of their 91-76 victory over the Wizards.

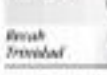
Even with the arrival of reinforcements Abby Santos, Rikki Miss and Sonia David, the Steamers have managed just a single win in their last four games. They dropped a 91-82 decision to Harbour Centre Tuesday.

Steamers coach Alan Gregorio is also pinning his hopes on former University of the East guard Marcy Arellano and San Beda standout Ogie Menor and ex-Far Eastern Tamaraw Mac Barracael.

| STANDINGS | W | L |
|---|---|---|
| Harbour C. | 8 | 1 |
| Magnolia | 7 | 1 |
| Barako | 7 | 1 |
| Hapee | 5 | 3 |
| Toyota Otis | 3 | 6 |
| Burger King | 3 | 7 |
| Pharex | 2 | 7 |

GAMES TODAY (Ynares Sports Arena)
1 p.m.—Burger King vs. Hapee Toothpaste
4 p.m.—Magnolia vs. Toyota Otis

## Boxing change we can believe in



BARE EYE

Brian Trinidad

NO OBAMA-LOOK ALIKE OUT there, but it's easy to believe in the change they will seek during the national amateur boxing summit slated in hospitable Bacolod later this month.

The conference, which tops the national amateur boxing championship scheduled Jan. 16-23, could be called by any name.

It's being planned and launched with limited fanfare.

It also doesn't claim anything big, like scoring a knockout or dropping a ruler underneath.

* * *

Yes, it would be apt to call it a reconstruction conference, a make-up meeting, or a solution summit.

But no matter what name, the assembly scheduled in Bacolod appears ready to open a bigger, brighter era in Philippine amateur boxing.

Contrary to advance criticism, it doesn't claim to break new ground.

It will be a summit of amateur boxing stakeholders. Period.

* * *

OK, a summit.

But please don't make the mistake of lumping it with the aborted summit planned by failed Philippine Olympic Committee bigwig following the EP debacle in the Beijing Olympics.

Remember how that one announced while the IOF contingent continued to lay our watery egg after another at the Bird's Nest in Beijing, washed right on the planning mat?

* * *

For the record, that planned summit crumbled because it was designed mainly to telecast.

You know, to send the message that EP sports was—uh, uh—on the right track.

It was to serve as cover-up for all the failures and mistakes in Philippine sports.

Anyway, knowing former Manny V. Pangilinan, this one isn't expected to be televised should be anything but a making-up for the scintillating affair.

It should be an honest-to-goodness

Xavier and Ateneo Kia Sirak renew rivalry
THE EXCITING RIVALRY BETWEEN Xavier and Ateneo Kia Sirak comes alive with the 2009 opening of the 2009 Fabulous Manila Tomas Loay Luzi Basketball Association Tournament starting on Saturday at the JMC High School gym at Taft Ave., Manila.
Sponsored by Tang brothers—Jane and Jamie—the Xavier Golden Stallions will be opening for their fifth title after downing the Chiang Kai Shek Blue Dragons in one of the hottest title series last year.
World Slasher goes 5 days
THE WORLD SLASHER CUP—TWENTY-TWO a five-day event from Jan. 9 to 14 at the new at the Rockwell Coliseum.
Organizers decided on a traditional three-day format to allow more participants to join the event.
Interested parties may log on to www.asiaslasherevents.com and www.kidsfreshcom.ph or call 917-5823 or 911-2424 local 8863 or 826.
MVP lauds PCSO boxing
BOXING ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT Manny V. Pangilinan called the practical edition of the PCSO Amateur Boxing Championships a rousing success recently.
Held at the Cuneta Sports Center in Pasay City, the event saw Philadelphia Tacloban triumph over Olongo Cebuano (58-52), People Republic Korea over Pinoy Pacific (7-3), Jean Tigers beat Zwings Cheers (15-6), Oriente Tarayan St. team Charley Suarez (27-10), and Sweetheart Gaudet over Bethesda Lopez (13-0).

SPORTSWATCH

## POC set to chart four-year course

By Jane Manaros

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE will chart its course for the next four years in a planning session to be exclusively attended by the newly elected officials of the Olympic body.

POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta yesterday said the two-day planning session would map out the plan of action on a long-term basis by identifying the number of athletes who will be sent to the Games and the holiday break pulled some of the POC's programs.

Romasanta said POC president Peping Cojuangco and the new set of officials would decide on other directions to take on the way to the 2012 London Olympics during the convention tentatively scheduled on the last week of January at Mercedes Garden in Tarlac City.

Expected to join Cojuangco in the planning session are POC chief Monico Puentevella of weightlifting, boxing's Manny Lopez (first vice president), Mona Verallanger (2nd VP) of squat talents, wushu's Adhan Camacho (treasurer) and BodyBuilding's Cordon Benjamin Maloof (bodybuilding).

"There are a lot of concerns that should be tackled and addressed by the POC," said Romasanta. "Besides the Olympics, SEA Games and the Asian Games, there are several events that the country should participate in so the POC will have its hands full," he added.

Among the concerns the POC is expected to concentrate on are the programs and competitions for elite sports.

COJUANGCO

## Most NSAs now at PhilSports after leaving Rizal Memorial

By Marc Anthony Reyes

EXCEPT FOR A FEW, MOST NATIONAL sports associations have already transferred their offices from the 73-year-old Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila to the more spacious and spacious Philippine Sports City.

The National Golf Association of the Philippines was among the last to leave yesterday. The NGAP now holds office on the third floor of PhilSports Building B.

PSC executive director Ma. Victoria Uy said almost all NSAs have already settled down in their new homes where their offices are also housed in nearby buildings.

Rooms and other holding facilities become available at the PhilSports after three international leased vacated the place last year.

"The PSC chair [Harold Tamayo] wanted all the athletes and their offices to be moved to PhilSports," Uy told the Inquirer. "But others preferred to stay."

Tamayo had earlier decided to decongest the RMSC and house the athletes in suitable living quarters.

"We practiced reasons," Uy said, some NSAs were allowed to stay at the RMSC so their athletes will be close to facilities while training.

The holdover NSAs are boxing, athletics, taekwondo, wushu, lawn tennis, gymnastics, badminton and baseball, which all have training rooms inside the RMSC.

In fact, construction of the new tennis/volleyball gym is to be finished by the PSC in the near of P13 million is set to be spent today, according to Uy.

The national leagues are currently billeted at the PSC-maintained boxing camp in Baguio City while waiting for the completion of the gym here.

Uy added that the agency's legal department is studying its options regarding the issuance of the ground floor of the Rizal Memorial stadium (but to-stade-several) new joints.

Editor Tobbser S. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Cebrian

SPORTS

# Lakers, Celtics get stung by foes

LOS ANGELES—DAVID WEST and Chris Paul combined for 72 points to help the New Orleans Hornets sting the Los Angeles Lakers 126-105 on Tuesday, the winless surging past the Pacific Conference leaders with a fourth-quarter rally.

West delivered a career-best spelling 40 points and Paul added 32 with 15 assists to end the Lakers' six-game winning streak. Sasha Vujacic had a season-high four three-pointers in 20 minutes at Staples Center.

"We knew that we were going to have to score a lot of points," Hornets coach Byron Scott said after the game.

"But the last two games that we played, we just couldn't get it done and allowed Chris to guard us. So tonight we had a lot more movement and guys were in attack mode early and we stayed that way for the entire game."

Meanwhile, the Boston Celtics marched on their beheading style continued, burying a team reduced by a years to New Orleans.

The Charlotte Bobcats, originally the Charlotte Hornets, stunned the Celtics in overtime on Tuesday, grabbing a 114-106 victory to hand the NBA champions their fifth loss in seven games.

Raymond Felton scored 28 points, Gerald Wallace contributed 23 and rookie DJ Augustin came up with 11 of his 20 points in overtime as the host Bobcats won for just the 13th time in 35 games this season.

"It was just a really good team effort," Bobcats coach Larry Brown told reporters. "Raymond made some huge plays and DJ, down the stretch, I was hugging him to them."

The rebounding of center Emeka Okafor, who had 17 rebounds and 23 points, also was a big factor, Brown said.

Paul Pierce scored Boston (20-7) with 28 points while Ray Allen had 26 and it was space defensive performance that hurt the Celtics, according to coach Doc Rivers.

"We let them score at will," Rivers told reporters. "They shot over 50 percent in the second half and that never happens against us, but it did tonight."

Trailing Los Angeles, 99-94, with 8:31 remaining, the Hornets (21-16) found new life, outscoring the Lakers 22-6 to claim their fifth win in six games. West had 15 points in the run and finished with 11 rebounds.

"He was rolling, and when he's going like that we are going to feed him," Paul told reporters.

Kobe Bryant scored 28 points for the Lakers (27-6), including 20 in the third quarter, but did not score in the final nine minutes.

He also left four defiants did the Lakers no.

"We were out of here pretty much all night defensively," Bryant, who made six three-pointers, told reporters.

"We weren't able to control them like we normally have the first few times we've played them. Everybody wants to talk about offense, defense or whatever you want to have games."

Paul's jumper with three seconds to play in regulation forced overtime. Kevin Garnett scored the first two points of the extra session before the Bobcats went on an 11-2 run.

"We came out and tried to match their energy and stayed with them the whole game," Bobcats forward Adam Morrison, who had 13 points, told reporters. "We got down seven in their second extra, who were playing well, but we battled back and got back to it at the end."

In Orlando, Florida, Hedo Turkoglu scored 22 points and the Magic held off a late scoring burst by Gana Diaby to beat the Washington Wizards, 89-81.

Orlando center Dwight Howard had his league-leading 20th double-double, with 15 points and 14 rebounds. Jameer Nelson added 14 points for the Magic who rebounded from their loss at Toronto on Sunday.

Butler had 20 points, all in the second half, and Antawn Jamison scored 13 for the recently emerged Wizards, who fell to 6-3 against Orlando this season.

Elsewhere in the NBA, the Philadelphia 76ers slipped the Houston Rockets, 104-99; the Minnesota Timberwolves clipped the Memphis Grizzlies, 94-87; the Oklahoma Thunder topped the New York Knicks, 107-99; the Chicago Bulls held off the Sacramento Kings, 95-94; and the Dallas Mavericks thrashed the LA Clippers, 137-103. Reuters, AP



LOS ANGELES: Lakers star Kobe Bryant tries to put up a shot against New Orleans forward David West

# Beermen hold off Kings; SLR up

## Norwood faces suspension

By Manny R. Castillo

COMING ALL THE WAY FROM THE WILDCARD PHASE HAS ITS ADVANTAGES AS Far as San Miguel coach Noli Tinagbacgan is concerned.

Believing that his one-induced corner toughened up in that one-minute-to-the-stage of the 32nd PBA Philippine Cup, the Beermen last night prevailed over a 76-75 decision of Barangay Ginebra in take Game 2 of their quarterfinal series.

Deadon Hontiveros and Danny Ildefonso, who have good for a combined three points in the first half, came to the Beermen's rescue when needed in San Miguel moved within another victory of reaching the semifinals.

Hontiveros scored 12 points in the third to keep San Miguel's head above water, and Ildefonso drained the marginal short stab with 47.8 seconds left in the wildcard qualifier Beermen drew first blood before a big and raucous 16 hosts Ginebra fans.

"Playing in the wildcard was a big factor for us because it toughened us up for situations like these," said San Miguel coach Noli Tinagbacgan. "We're still not out of the woods. It's just one game. We need to stay focused."

Lordy Tajaste keyed a four-starting San Miguel offense, hitting all of his 13 points in the first half. And when he got into foul trouble and his guys were allowed, Seigle and Hontiveros promptly took over.

Rookie Rodney Carocido also played splendidly for Tanquingcen, scoring 10 points (two in Ginebra got an unlikely chunker to Billy Mamaril, who led the Gin Kings with 22 points.

In the first game, Sta. Lucia, showing

STA. LUCIA'S Ayden Gregorio finds his perch to the basket blocked by Rain or Shine's Eaber Marmeto

# Burger King, Guiao forge 2-year deal

By Manny R. Castillo

YENG GUIAO JOINED A HOME AS QUEZON ex he left his old one.

The fleetfoot deliberators and sounds of the Philippines now come to terms in principle with Burger King, the old Sta.51 franchise which he will handle when the Import-spiced Fiesta Cup opens Feb. 15.

"We have already agreed in principle to a two-year deal," Guiao, veteran of five championships with Crispa and Purefoods and the Sixteen wins the phone yesterday. "Only the minor details are left to be ironed out."

One of those kinks in Guiao's wish to take along Fonzi Nocheseda, the former national player who has been his chief deputy over the years. Some will have Jorge Galent as assistant at Burger King.

Guiao has made a name over what basically with Red Bull before the end of last year, leaving an assistant to make the Bombers win as the team lead, over the past three years, given up to two players for little in return. Between of financial constraints.

KOMBO

In a related development as Burger King, Mikee Romero, the 800 who made Harbour Centre good in the name of Philippine Basketball League will come to as a minority shareholder of the popular hamburger-fast burger chain in the near few months.

Only percent of Burger King in the Philippines is owned by the Beer Lion Group of Companies, the same group that owns Mr.23 and Bedfit. Romero, who also sold part of Harbour Centre to telecommunications mogul Ramon S. Ang-Mikee, "will pump more money once the expansion [of Burger King] goes full blast."

Romero, incidentally, will sit as the team's alternate representative in the PBA board, something which he agreed to after being asked by Lim recently. Romero, who said that Harbour Center will remain in the PBL.

As of now, only the boss is to be charged to Burger King set left to be determined by the Office of the PBA Commissioner.

Since Lim is just a majority owner of the company, the PBA can still charge Burger King a transfer fee that would amount to 10 percent of the current price of a franchise which is around P70 million.

# Trace Laguna claims Ekwe in lottery draft

TRACE LAGUNA PICKED 30-DEfunct center Sim Ekwe in the special lottery draft of the Smart Liga Filipinas Conference II, which holds off-cure seeds in Greater Santos City.

The Strikers, however that such after acquiring the 6-foot-8 Ekwe, a two-time NCAA Most Valuable Player who led San Beda to the last three seasons of the country's oldest collegiate basketball league.

Ekwe was allowed to play in the league, after the Liga Board posted a resolution last month granting special playing status to foreign-born players who have played at least three years in any school league affiliated with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, provided the player goes through a special draft.

Ekwe is expected to lead the Strikers in the first leg of the four-conference phase hosted by the Gerdon MC Warriors in General Santos City.

"We prepared hard for this and we are just so glad we bagged the big one," said Strikers coach Norman Ma. "Ekwe will definitely boost our chances this conference although there are still many teams that are much stronger than us."

After getting seeded in the Group leg are the Batos San Beda-Taytay and Zamboanga.

SBP executive director Sonny Barrios, who is also the Liga president and CEO, welcomed the entry of Ekwe to the fledgling league.

"Sim is a special player," Barrios said. "He is a proven winner and an attraction in any league."

Completing the series of Liga teams are Bone Ace, Smart-Omega Bacolod, Basilan, Harbour Centre-Tagaig Batang Global, Laguna, Quezon Red Riders, Cebu, Iloilo-Bilang Isarok, Mbice Mistrict and Manila. Cordyl P. Espino

DEBUT: David Beckham makes his debut with Milan yesterday at AC Milan during the team's friendly soccer match against Hamburg SV in Dubai. Among those who cheered for the former England captain were the wards were with 4-year-old son Cruz (inset). AFP PHOTO

# British boxing scribe belittles Pacquiao

VETERAN TRAINER FLOYD MAYWEATHER he isn't alone in his opinion that Pinky Elorde is still proud Manny Pacquiao take submission in their May 2 fight welterweight showdown in Las Vegas.

Another British boxing writer Geoff "The Frontpage" Founder of the ringsidepost.com joined Mexican great Erik Morales in belittling the Filipino hero's chance against the "British Mexican."

"Morales will win inside the distance in a fight that may not even be close, if the Mexican turns up fit, healthy and ready for action," he said.

Founder went even further to say "Pacquiao is going to get his ass whipped by Ricky Hatton."

"Morales is demonstrably comfortable, and powerful, at 140, which is where the fight will be made, and he has never been close to being beaten at that weight," he said.

"I say it getting full respect to Manny Pacquiao's speed, agility and guile—boxing gives the same respect to those qualities in Pedro Hidalgo[illegible], Gelbon Hidlar, defeated by knockout last November." Cordyl P. Espino

A plus METRO

# 2 suspects in 'Ka Popoy' slay killed

## Stabbed dead by alleged comrades inside tightly guarded prison

By Marlon Ramos

TWO SUSPECTED REBELS ACCUSED IN THE killing of labor leader Feliciano "Popoy" Lagman were allegedly stabbed dead by their supposed comrades inside a tightly guarded jail in a police camp in Taguig City Tuesday afternoon, police said.

Brandy Gerosas, 26, and Bernard Reyes, 38, succumbed to multiple stab wounds as they were being taken to Taguig Pateros District Hospital.

Senior Supt. Camilo Cascolan, Taguig police chief, said the slain men belonged to the Revolutionary Proletariats Army–Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB), a breakaway group of the communist New People's Army.

The two were among the eight people charged in the assassination of Lagman, who was shot dead inside the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, on Feb. 7, 2001.

A former top commander under Lagman before the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) due to ideological differences with other CPP leaders said later founded the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas.

Cascolan said jail guards of the Metro Manila District Jail immediately secured the inmates who allegedly took turns in stabbing and beating up the victims.

He identified them as Randy Perez, 39, of Warren Ridge, Cubao, Quezon City, and Rolando Cachagan, 25, of Sampaloc, Manila; Victor Soldez, 25, a resident of Aurora, Isabela; Albert Bonales, 23, of Binangonan, Rizal; and Ernesto Eroza, 28, a resident of Makilala City.

Cascolan said the suspects were also members of RPA-ABB.

He, however, said it was still unclear if the killing was triggered by a reported in-fighting involving members of the rebel group detained at BMDJ.

According to Cascolan, the inmates had just come from the BMDJ's main gate after escorting Gerosas's wife Evelyn, who visited him, when at least five men accosted them as they were walking on the second floor of the Special Intensive Care Area (Sica) building around 4 p.m.

The suspects, he said, stood Gerosas inside Cell 43 where they repeatedly stabbed the victim using an improvised ice pick.

Reyes tried to defend his comrade but he, too, was fatally stabbed by one of the men, Cascolan added.

Cascolan said they believed the incident was not an offshoot of a duel between rival gangs inside the jail facility, which was located inside Camp Bagong Diwa, headquarters of the National Capital Region Police Office.

"The killing was well-planned. It was pre-meditated," he told in a phone interview.

Despite the arrest, Cascolan said they had a hard time investigating the incident as witnesses, including some jail guards, refused to cooperate with their investigation.

## Mismatched plate number leads to dawn shootout in QC; 4 slain

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A MISMATCHED PLATE NUMBER on an old Toyota Revo led to an encounter between suspected members of a kidnap-for-ransom group and police operatives in Quezon City at dawn yesterday.

All four men aboard the Revo were killed when they shot it out with operatives from the Quezon City Police District and Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group.

Police Insp. Angelo Nicolas, head of the city's anti-carnapping unit, said they spotted the green Revo on Quezon Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue at around 2:50 a.m.

He said they got suspicious because the Revo was quite old but its plate number, ZFW 301, was new and registered to a new vehicle.

"We flagged down the Toyota Revo ... but it did not stop and instead sped off," Nicolas said.

The lawmen then gave chase and were fired at when they joined on the suspects upon reaching Elliptical Road. The gunmen then fired back, killing the suspects, Nicolas said.

He said the suspects were about to carry out an abduction of a Filipino-Chinese who lives in the area when they were spotted by patrolling operatives.

"The group was already prepared to take their target because they are armed and had sufficient manpower to overcome," Nicolas said.

He explained that usually, if the suspects are still eyeing a target, kidnappers do not do it in groups and usually do not carry firearms.

Nicolas refused to identify the target, saying he is not in the position to talk about it, and besides, it would cause undue alarm to the family.

He identified the slain suspects as Calvin Lagado, Emelito Cunia, Rey Mendonado and Joel Esguerra.

He disclosed that Cunia, Mendonado and Esguerra were dead on the spot.

Lagado, he said, was declared dead on arrival at the East Avenue Medical Center.

Nicolas said all the slain suspects had criminal records with the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response Unit (Pacer).

## Pizza parlor loses ₱500,000

A PIZZA PARLOR IN PASIG City reportedly lost on Monday more than ₱500,000 and its owners threaten to resign.

SPO3 Federico Garcia said they suspect an inside job as they found no evidence of forced entry. There were also boxes come once the "back gate door" apparently is "unlocked" by employees, he said.

Garcia said all the managers of the pizza parlor had keys to the premises and the seamless combination of the vault which contained ₱1,172,000 and a 30-cal. revolver.

The theft was reported to the Pasig police on Monday morning by the guard on duty and a service crew. The opening managers confirmed that the amount was the store's cash at sales from Dec. 27 to Jan. 5. — Elvie Sevilla

## Trader shot, killed in front of his kids

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A BUSINESSMAN PORU WAS DRIVING HIS two children to school was shot and killed on board his Pajero by a man on board a motorcycle along Mindanao St., near the boundary of Manila and Quezon City, yesterday morning.

Supt. Carlito Felicitas, commander of the Quezon City Police District Galas Station, identified the victim as Gerardo Lindo, 46, of Doña Maria Street in Sampaloc, Manila.

Felicitas said the victim, who was in the trucking business, was shot at close range by the lone gunman despite being wounded after a brief chase.

Investigators said the suspect on board an SRM Hyosin motorcycle was wearing a helmet taken by Medical the victims' wife, Ching Rosete Sotto at around 8:30 a.m. and took a shot at the vehicle as he signaled Lindo to stop.

But Lindo instead drove off. The gunman gave chase and again shot Lindo when he caught up with him on Palanca Street. Police said Lindo's two children were unhurt.

Witnesses brought Lindo to East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Hospital where he died due to four gunshot wounds in different parts of the body.

The motive of the assault, police said, is yet to be determined.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

| Activities | Schedule |
|---|---|
| 1. Issuance of Bid Documents | January 5 to February 5, 2009 (8:00 a.m.) |
| 2. Pre-bid Conference | January 21, 2009, 9:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room |
| 3. Application for Eligibility and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents | January 5, 2009, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room |
| 4. Opening of Bids | February 5, 2009, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room |

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
IAEB No. 2009-001 - Goods

ACCESS POINTS

| Project Description | Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) & Source of Fund | Delivery/ Completion Period | Date/Time | | Place of Bid Documents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pre-bid Conference | Deadline/ Opening of Bids | |
| ACCESS POINTS<br>• Supply, delivery and installation of Access Points and Controller Switch, three (3) units active of Business Continuity Management Site, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila (Lot 1)<br>• Supply, delivery and installation of Access Points and Controller Switch, one (1) unit active of Business Continuity Management Site, Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila (Lot 2) | Lot 1: P1,000,000.00<br>P1,280,000.00<br>Lot 2: P 500,000.00<br>P 640,000.00<br>Source: Procurement & Logistics Management Division<br>Corporate Budget | On calendar days after contract signing (Lot 1 and Lot 2) | Jan. 20, 2009 2:00 p.m. | Feb. 12, 2009 2:00 p.m. | PPD,SSS,GS |

DID YOU KNOW

ARLINGTON! is the Lithuanian way of saying Bayan ng Makati City in the American Cemetery and Memorial, which was commissioned in 1960 to remind Filipinos of American soldiers who fought during World War II.

Cecil C. Mercado, Inquirer Research

# Manila cops assigned to anti-illegal drugs unit relieved

By Tina G. Santos

AMID REPORTS THAT WERE received in extension and bribery activities, all operatives assigned at the Manila Police District's anti-illegal drug unit have been relieved from their posts.

Also, Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, MPD director, ordered the filing of administrative charges against some 25 members of the police force's Station Anti-Illegal Drug (SAID).

Rosales said the dismissal of the anti-illegal drug operatives, which took effect late last month, happened after he received reports that the lawmen were engaged in irregularities and mishandling of drug cases.

The raided victims were suspected drug pushers and users they arrested, Rosales said.

"We're trying to eliminate rogue cops from the ranks, and we wanted to deliver the message to everyone that we mean business," he said.

DAID chief Supt. Roderick Mariano was transferred to the MPD Police Community Relations Office, while his men were deployed to different units of the MPD.

But Rosales assured Manila residents that their campaign against illegal drugs will not be compromised with the relief of the police personnel. The MPD official added he would assign another unit to look into the illegal drugs operations in the city.

In the meantime, all police stations in the city were tasked to go after drug pushers and users in their respective areas.

Rosales said the relief of SAID personnel should serve as a warning to other MPD units to do their jobs lest be monitoring the performance of all other units.

Rosales also disclosed that a major revamp involving station commanders will be effected before the end of the month.

He said the reorganization will be based on the performance of the police officers.

Rosales, who has ordered the expansion of losing army and a disciplinarian, stressed the importance of raising the level of professionalism among policemen through discipline.

"Only a disciplined police force can help hold the confidence of the people in us," he said.

Rosales also based plans to abolish several of the MPS police community precincts upon the orders of Mayor Alfredo Lim.

The mayor, who cited various complaints of residents about the rampant illegal activities in several areas of the city said that some PCPs were not functioning well in the fight against crime.

But Rosales said the removal of the PCPs would only be temporary and experimental. He added that affected policemen will be transferred to different MPD units.

# 'Mummified' corpse found in condo unit

By Allison W. Lopez

THE DECOMPOSED BODY OF A 55-year-old woman was discovered inside her condominium unit in Makati City on Tuesday.

PO3 Adre Balden of the Makati Police Department said the victim, identified as Zenaida Monroyo, could have been dead for several months.

Relatives of Monroyo, a native of Batalo, Batangas, found the lesbian-owner's body on the bed where they forcibly opened her Cityland Shaang Tower unit on Salas Extension, Pio del Pilar, at 2 p.m.

Bolden said Monroyo, who was in pajamas and slippers, already looked "mummified."

He said the victim was last seen on April 12 by her kin when she was confined in a Batangas hospital for diarrhea. She reportedly returned to Manila after two days.

Since then, Bolden said relatives claimed that Monroyo, who kept to herself, no longer had communications with them.

# This lawyer should be disbarred

FELIBERTO VERANO, LAWyer of the 'Alabang Boys,' submitted pertaining the release order for his clients and still the machinery of the Department of Justice to do it.

He thought he could pull a fast one on Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Gonzalez may be a little cranky at times because of his age, but he has still full use of his faculties.

The old man didn't sign the release order because it was a drug case. He wanted to review the case first.

While vacationing in Hong Kong, Gonzalez, according to my sources at the Department of Justice (DOJ), blew his top when he read about the controversy over the release order.

Some aides of the justice secretary in the past had private interests.

He has since learned a lesson not to trust anybody in the department when it comes to big cases, which could be possible sources of graft.

Gonzalez should by now know that the DOJ, like Malacañang, is a snake pit.

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

* * *

What Verano did was very unethical and unprofessional.

He and his colleagues in the DOJ, Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor, should be disbarred.

But before he faces disbarment proceedings, Blancaflor should first be kicked out of the DOJ.

* * *

No matter how strong the denial Verano and the DOJ people who handled the drug case of the Alabang Boys have issued, the public will not believe that big money did not change hands.

Why would Verano risk his profession preparing the release order for his clients using a DOJ letterhead unless he had the blessing of some DOJ people?

What he did made him liable for disbarment.

The bigger the risk, the bigger the amount involved. That's simple logic.

* * *

State Prosecutors John Resadio, who dismissed the drug cases against the Alabang Boys, is known in the DOJ as the "dismissal prosecutor."

Resadio has dismissed many big-time drug cases.

It appears that this guy has an ax to grind or all. He graduated having a student of Veranes at the San Sebastian University-College of Law.

He should have inhibited himself from the drug cases involving his former professor is the lawyer.

* * *

I covered the Department of Justice, then called the Ministry of Justice, for a few months in 1977 for the now defunct Times Journal.

Back then, people at the DOJ, under Minister Vicente Abad Santos, were much more decent and incorruptible.

I recall that at that time, one of the close aides of Abad Santos was a lady lawyer, Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

## METROBRIEFS

### Near fire across Palace

A POWER outage hit some parts of Malacañang after a fire almost broke out in the area around noon yesterday. Initial investigation showed that construction workers, who were laying cable, ignited the Palace' dried fallen leaves. An underground high-tension wire of nearly street light posts. Senior Fire Officer 2 Emmanuel Barque said thick smoke billowed out of the manhole and sparks were seen across the entrance gate for Palace visitors on J.P. Laurel corner Arguelles Streets in San Miguel, Manila at around noon. The fire was immediately put out by responding firemen.

*Tina G. Santos*

### Raps readied vs cop

THE POLICEMAN who accidentally discharged damaged the nose and teeth of Quezon City Councilor Antonio Inton's car could be discussed from various for grave misconduct and other offenses, Quezon City Security director for administration Tomas Sapit. Elmo San Diego said yesterday, they would initiate the filing of an administrative case against PO1 Jonathan Yanay. "Although the councilor will not file charges, we would recommend for his (Yanay) dismissal for grave misconduct," San Diego told reporters. Yanay reportedly fired a warning shot to break up a fight among Daniel Sundo, relative of Barangay Culiat Chairman Ely Tan. Inton told the car of Inton who was then passing by the area.

*Nancy C. Carvajal*

### Factory warehouse burned

DEFECTIVE electrical wiring could have caused the fire which gutted the warehouse of a chemical factory in Bonifacio Global City early Wednesday morning, an investigator said. Chief Insp. Fey Agoto, city fire marshall, said the fire broke out around 12:05 a.m. at the warehouse owned by Zimmco Corp. on 31 FMF Compound, Barangay Tanauan. It was put out an hour later before it spread to an adjacent storeroom where drums of chemicals used in producing shampoo and other beauty products are kept. Agoto estimated damage to property at P500,000.

*Marlon Ramos*

### Magallanes Village fire

AN ESTIMATED P1 million in property was lost in a fire that gutted a house in Magallanes Village, Makati City yesterday. SPO1 Samson Mercado of the Makati Fire Department said the fire that struck the two-storey home of Jose Mario Lopez-Vito on 28 Sta. Ana St. around 11:00 a.m. began in the storeroom. He said house cook Gloria Nolasco noticed smoke from the room which eventually went up into flames. The fire was put out at noon.

*Allison W. Lopez*

# WORLDBRIEFS

## Detainees sue for release

WASHINGTON — Four men being held as terror suspects at a U.S. military base in Afghanistan are asking a federal judge for the right to sue their release — a right already given to detainees at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba — on Wednesday and will test whether a 2002 Supreme Court decision — allowing al-Qaida and Taliban suspects at the U.S.-run base in Cuba to challenge their detention — should be extended to detainees held at other military prisons overseas. AP

## 'Love' hormone

LONDON — The "love" hormone linked to feelings of sexual pleasure, bonding and reader-response can also appear to help us recognize familiar faces, Swiss researchers said on Tuesday. When given oxytocin — involved in nursing and childbirth — nose-accessible socialized animals and human faces in the laboratory did not help them recognize inanimate objects, according to Peter Kunz of University of Zurich and colleagues. Reuters

## Pink iguanas

LONDON — Pink iguanas unknown to Charles Darwin during his visits to the Galapagos Islands may provide evidence of species diversity, researchers from the English weekend's Science Society, according to researchers.

The findings also for the first time describe the black-striped reptiles — first seen in 1986 and only a few more times since — as a new species, said Gabriele Gentile of Rome's University Tor Vergata, who led the study. Reuters

## Basalt rock wall

PARIS — A biodiversity researcher has found a huge basalt rock formation on the Taiwan Strait, resembling a city wall and dividing rainfall-to-mountains on land. The 200-meter-long, 15-meter-high underwater wall, which looks like thousands of pillars packed together, is nice the Pescadores archipelago, according to researcher Jong Ming-haoua. Reuters

## Coffee counters cancer

NEW YORK — New research indicates that drinking coffee lowers the risk of developing cancer of the oral cavity or throat, at least in the case of consumption of Japan. The consumption of coffee in Japan is relatively high, as in the case of cancer of the oral cavity or throat. To look into any protective effect of coffee drinking, Dr. Toni Mayenenua of Tohoku University, Sendai, and colleagues analyzed data from the population-based Miyagi Cohort Study in Japan. Reuters

## Holier than thou?

SAO PAULO — A little-known brazilian farming town with sugarcane wealth to set to upstage Rio de Janeiro by erecting a statue of Christ that will eclipse its famous equivalent atop Rio's Corcovado mountain. The China statue in Santana do Ipanema, northeast of Sao Paulo city, will be 110 feet tall when perched on its 128-foot (39-meter) pedestal. Brazil's daily newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo said on Tuesday. Reuters

## Jail's sexual gorillas

SYDNEY — An Australian court has issued a stern warning about the sexual predators a young driver faces in jail if he does not stop speeding, as authorities struggle to stop teenagers street racing. "You'll find big, ugly hairy strong men [in jail] who've got doors only another could see that will pass a lot of attention to you — and your anatomy," Magistrate Brian Maloney said. Reuters



[illegible]

1. The Judicial Center of the Philippines, through its duly accredited committee (the "...") intends to procure the services of a Lump Contractor (the "...") for the [illegible] Judicial Center in Quezon City, Philippines.

2. [illegible] Lump Contractor must submit a [illegible] Proposal Security in the form of a [illegible] Bond, a Cashier's/Manager's Check, or a Bank Draft/Guarantee issued by a [illegible] Bank, in the amount of [illegible] Pesos (P[illegible]), which shall be valid for [illegible] days from the date of the [illegible] Bid Opening.

3. [illegible] Lump Contractor shall sign as the main act of obligations from [illegible] Lump Contractor's [illegible] Bid, [illegible] Bid Bulletins, [illegible] Bid Bulletins, [illegible] Bid Bulletins

# The WORLD

Edita Lorenzo B. Querol

# Mumbai killers got orders by phone

A MANAGER of the International Bird Rescue Research Center in northern California rubdowns one of the bruised, disoriented pelicans.

## Sick pelicans baffle experts

LOS ANGELES—WILDLIFE experts are trying to figure out why sick, disoriented and bruised California brown pelicans are being found in record numbers along more than 1,000 kilometers of coastline.

The birds, some of them dead, have been spotted from San Francisco to Baja California, Mexico. Many have been found far from their homes on roads, fields and backyards.

The pelicans started appearing late last month north of San Pedro in Southern California, then began appearing farther north, said Dave Hardesty, executive director of the International Bird Rescue Research Center in Stanford in Northern California.

The center's San Pedro facility received more than 80 birds in the past 7 to 10 days, while the Stanford one has received about 20, Hardesty said Tuesday.

A more encouraging sign is that the Stanford center has received about 20 released birds back, he said.

Hardesty said the center is also seeing a larger than normal number of adults.

The sick birds are thin, seem confused and disoriented, and have discoloration on their pouches and feet. "This type of disorientation in adult pelicans is something we'd see during a domoic acid outbreak, but we have yet to see them exhibiting the other common symptoms," Hardesty said.

Domoic acid, a neurotoxin, is produced by microscopic algae. Birds and sea mammals ingest the acid by eating fish and shellfish that consume the algae.

Birds poisoned by domoic acid generally experience seizures, but the pelicans admitted to the rescue center did not suffer seizures, Hardesty said.

Rescuers have sent pelican blood samples and carcasses to state and federal wildlife authorities and laboratories that specialize in detecting potentially fatal algae toxins. Hardesty said new results were expected in about a week. AP

NEW DELHI—"WE HAVE THREE FOREIGNERS, including women," the gunman said into the phone.

The response was laconic, simple: "Kill them." Random flurries rang out inside the Mumbai hotel, followed by cheering that could be heard over the phone.

The ruthless exchange comes from a transcript of phone calls Indian authorities say they intercepted during the Mumbai attacks in November. They were part of a dossier of evidence New Delhi handed Pakistan this week that it says definitively proves that the siege was launched from across the border.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday said that he did not believe the gunmen were acting alone, and Pakistani state agencies must have had a hand in the attacks.

The dossier stands as countries of any Pakistani officials or agencies.

Pakistani authorities are reviewing the evidence, but have dismissed Singh's claims as "propaganda offensive" designed "to whip up tension" in the region.

Indian leaders have made clear they do not want a military conflict with Pakistan, and Pakistani intelligence chief said there should be no war over the Mumbai attacks.

"We want to every to Pakistan, but can completely out of our minds," INDIAN intelligence chief, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, told Christian correspondents Dan Day Episcopal. "We hopes it all over that terrorist in our country, or India."

Predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan have fought three wars against each other since they gained independence in 1947.

Mumbai transcripts, which were obtained by the newspaper The Hindu, show that the 10 gunmen who carried out the attacks were in close contact with their handlers throughout the siege. India says the handlers directing the attackers had left Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based militant group.

"There are three members and one secretary of the cabinet in your hotel. We don't know to which room," the handler told a gunman inside the Taj Mahal hotel at 3:18 a.m. on the first night of the attack.

"Ah! That a good news. If is the icing on the cake!" the gunman said.

The handlers told another team of gunmen who had seized a Jewish centre to shoot hostages if necessary.

"If you are still threatened, then don't saddle yourself with the burden of the hostages. Immediately kill them," he said.

Its then added, "If the hostages are killed, it will spoil relations between India and Israel."

"Yes sir, it. God willing," the gunman replied.

Tim Jewish foreigners included a rabbi and his wife, were killed inside the Jewish center.

Later in the night, nearly 24 hours after the attacks began, the handlers urged the gunmen to "be strong in the name of Allah."

"Brother, you have to fight. This is a matter of prestige of Islam," the handler said. "You may feel tired or droopy but the commanders of Islam have left everything behind, their mothers, their fathers."

The gunmen were told several times not to kill any Muslim hostages.

The attackers used several different mobile phones, including those belonging to the hostages, likely after the siege began, Indian authorities say. They began intercepting calls from inside the hotel. They were also able to pick up calls carried over the Internet, which the handlers used to route some calls, according to the dossier.

The siege lasted nearly three days. Its longer than country experts said it should have, and, apparently, for longer than the gunmen had expected or could. The handlers told the gunmen on Nov. 27 that "the operation has to be concluded tomorrow morning." But it was 24 more hours before it finished.

Much of the dialogue has a macabre academic dynamic, analysed, the surviving gunman has said he and the rest of the group were trained by Lashkar in Pakistani Kashmir.

"We made a big mistake," one of the gunmen says into the phone, as hostages scream in the background. AP

Ashfaq Hussain Lagari

## Disclosure of fraud rocks India

NEW DELHI—THE CHAIRMAN of India's fourth-largest software outsourcing company resigned on Wednesday after admitting the company's profits had been distorted for several years, shaking faith in the country's corporate giants as dozens of the software service provider plunged nearly 80 percent.

News of the fraud dragged down the benchmark Bombay Stock Exchange index by 7.7 percent. The accounting scandal raises questions about the quality of corporate governance in India and is likely to overshadow upbeat the region.

The company's balance sheet overstated—it—"inflated" assets and "nonexistent" cash—to record a $1 billion hole that could no longer be concealed after a deal intended to save the struggling company was scrapped, the company chair, B. Ramalinga Raju, said in a letter to the board.

"Every attempt made to eliminate the gap failed," said Raju. "It was like riding a tiger, not knowing how to get off without being eaten."

B. Hanee Raju, managing director of Satyam Computer and Ravikanth's brother, also quit.

Satyam, which has the "truth" in India's ancient Sanskrit language, had "inflated profits over a period of (five) last several years," Raju said in his letter, which was released to the Bombay Stock Exchange. AP


PSALM Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation (PSALM) Privatization Bids and Awards Committee (the "Committee") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

10 MW Mapa-Lumbayanague Hydro Electric Power Plant located in Buhi/Tinambac Pilot Project Plant Complex, Buhi, Camarines Sur

(the "Asset"). The Asset is being privatized on an "as is, where is" basis. Regardless of its ownership for the remaining duration, the Asset must remain in its current location. In Buhi-Tinambac Plant Complex, until the date of the Pilot Transfer Date, as defined in the PPA or on Third (3rd) anniversary of the Closing Date, whichever, that prior to the transfer of the Asset from its current location, the Assistance for such transfer from the Department of Energy must be secured.

Interested parties must submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) to the Committee stating the full name, address, telephone and fax numbers of its representative(s) (who, unless of the principal concern), and signed by an authorized representative of its duly registered partnership, the Committee at the Pinnacle Offices, 6th Floor, Philippine Stock Exchange Building, 6764 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on 23 January 2009 (the "LOI Submission Deadline"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the issuance of the Bidding Packages, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 15 of RA 9136, both in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand (US Dollars) (US$2,000.00) (the "Participation Fee"). The Participation Fee shall be either in cash, manager's check, or cashier's check. At such changes, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking, and Participation Fee must be received by the Committee on or before 5:00 p.m. on 28 January 2009 in order an interested party to further participate in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Packages which includes the Bidding Procedures, shall be issued during office hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from 7 January 2009 until 28 January 2009 (the "Issuance") at the Pinnacle Office. Only interested parties in receipt of the Bidding Packages may participate in the Bidding Process. The Bidding Packages are non-transferable.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Issue Bid packs | 7 January 2009 to 28 April 2009 |
| Pre-Bid Conference | 10 February 2009, 2:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office |
| Bid Submission Deadline | 30 April 2009 - (one) noon at the Office at Office |

Submissions to the above must be in the form of a manager's check or cashier's check, which shall be in an amount equal to the Bid Security required by the Bidding Procedures. Bid Security shall be submitted in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit which must be acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the successful bidder will be returned only after the winning bidder has posted the required security, submitted the corporate performance of its obligations under the transaction. The details of the submission of the Bid Security are contained in the Bidding Packages.

Bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes. Each envelope shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 7th Floor, Philippine Building, 6764 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Envelopes and/or identifications shall be authorized by the Bids and Awards Committee. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidder's authorized representatives who are present at the time of the opening.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder, or proposal or bids therefore, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or reimburse any party for any expense or loss that he may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an asset will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the rules and procedures governing the conduct of the privatization process, without incurring any liability to any party. Interested parties are encouraged to consult with their respective advisors for any modifications, supplements or changes.

PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee



INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified manufacturers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Project | Procurement of 1 unit Water Pump |
| Location | Brgy. Old Sasmuan, Pampanga |
| Approved Budget | Three Million Eight Hundred Thirty Nine Thousand Pesos |
| Terms/Duration | 1 (one) calendar |
| Source of Funds | GAA, Regular |
| Bidder's Qualification | Contractor |

LOT Inside PHILIPPINES — Location of Single Whole, particular Cross, Hampshire and Mexico, not Mexico, Single, Single, Single

Editor Raul G. Mamaba • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Martona

# BUSINESS

# BSP reports record GIR of $37.1B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES ENDED 2008 WITH A RECORD $37.1 BILLION in foreign reserves despite the large outflow of "hot money" due to the food crisis and the global financial turbulence that led to the peso's decline.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that the country's gross international reserves (GIR) increased by $308 million compared to the official foreign exchange stock as of end-2007.

Supported by the seasonal surge in remittances from abroad, the GIR level in December likewise improved from the end-November level of $33.2 billion.

In a statement, the BSP said the full-year increase in the GIR level was fueled by inflows from its foreign exchange operations, earnings from its investments abroad, as well as the government's deposit of proceeds from foreign borrowings last year.

"Revaluation gains in the BSP's gold account holdings on account of the increase in the price of gold in the international market during the year also contributed to the higher year-end level," the central bank said.

Despite the sharp decline in commodity prices that started in August last year due to the slowing global economy, gold prices have firmed up in the previous period, just like cash and US Treasuries, is usually considered by risk-averse investors to be a safe haven in times of uncertainty.

As of the year-end, the BSP's stock of gold was valued at $4.36 billion, higher

BANGKO SENTRAL /A2

**IN THIS ISSUE**

**Hong Kong** investment firm buys 13% of Alliance Tuna /B3

**NFA posts** record 'palay' score /B4

## Shares close 1.7% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 1.7 percent higher on expectations that the central bank may cut interest rates as inflation continues to fall, dealers said.

The composite index rose 34.31 points to 2,003.89 points. The all-shares index rose 2.08 percent, or 25.93 points, to 1,268.90.

A total of 1.68 billion shares worth P2.2 billion ($47.3 million) changed hands.

Advancers swamped decliners 83 to 10 with 21 unchanged.

"Foreign investors are returning to the market, inspired by the perception the Philippine economy may be partially insulated from the global crisis," Tom Rodrigo of BDO Private Securities told Dow Jones Newswires, citing the government's planned increase in spending and recent economic data.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose 1.4 percent to P2,100 while Ayala Land Inc. added 3.9 percent to P1.20. Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. rose 2.1 percent to P39.10.

San Miguel Corp. A shares were steady at P61.50, while its B shares rose 3.5 percent to P44.

AFP

# Treasury sees decline in interest rates

By Michelle V. Borro

NATIONAL TREASURER ROBERTO SIA said that, with inflation seen to ease, the task of managing the government's liabilities would be easier this year than in 2008, projecting that interest rates would be softer in 2009.

The government assumed that the bellwether 91-day treasury bill rate would average between 5 and 7 percent this year when it drafted its budget program for 2009, Sia said.

But the 5- to 7-percent assumption now appears to be conservative, Sia agreed. It would be possible that the average 91-day T-bill rate could even fall below the conservative range because of decelerating inflation.

The three-month interest rate hit above 7 percent last year when annual inflation reached a 17-year high of 12.8 percent. But the 91-day T-bill rate declined a bit toward the end of the year and settled at 6.123 percent in the last auction day for short-term government securities held last Dec. 8.

"The outlook [for interest rates] this year is better," Sia told reporters yesterday. "Easing inflation will help."

As inflation slows down, pressure on interest rates will be lighter while those government securities is reduced. Treasury point interest rate, therefore, tend to lower interest rates.

The National Statistics Office reported the other day that inflation slowed down to 9 percent in December last year from 9.9

TREASURY'S /B2

# NPO

BUSINESS AIDE PLYING ALL OVER the plane that various government offices are shunning the NPO, which is the state-owned National Printing Office.

They are turning more and more to private corporations for their millions of pesos worth of printing business.

Among those government offices are the Department of Finance, Land Transportation Office and Manila International Airport Authority.

Those offices' biased, cautious officials of treasurers and assessors of local governments also would rather have nothing to do with NPO.

What an ayah could be happening!

To start with, the government offices have been complaining of delays to job orders with the NPO for one reason or another, which supposedly involves corruption.

According to my sources, the office seems to have been in a state of persistent mess the middle of last year.

What is going around that one official of the NPO has been busy trying to make a killing out of the contracts that the office had given out.

He goes around with two armed security personnel. He has a battery of lawyers—three in all, from what I heard. And aside from a shirt of steel, this brave soul even has a personal secretary.

Just exactly how much he spends for all those services, nobody knows.

* * *

TO TOP IT all, the son of this resident was said to be here boss using the names of some big shots in the Palace, such as Press Secretary Jesus Dureza and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

For instance, one boss at the NPO tapped some alleged NBI agents to take records from the offices of a number of NPO contractors.

**BREAKTIME**

*Conrado R. Bawad III*

The main reason was that those contracts were supposedly defective.

Well, and good. But how come the NPO did not cancel them or filed charges against the contractors? Okay, you got me there.

My info is that it all had something to do with the "15 percent rule," which is otherwise known down here to my homeguy as "commission."

Moreover, the handsome deal simply brought back the NPO supplies that were previously blacklisted for violation of various bidding rules.

Shall the poor guys down here in my hometown, who religiously pay their taxes because they have no choice, take it to mean that the NPO nowadays simply rewards contractors at whim?

* * *

NOW TO THE ongoing "transplant bullpen" case as a sideshare of the Meralco-GSIS fight, which is not yet over. If the talk in business circles is to be believed, the heart of the matter was only be this: Bel businessman Francis de Borja really offer P4 million to Court of Appeals Justice Juan Rabin, who chaired the CA division hearing the case?

My take on the whole thing is, well, I always worry about anonymous of attempted bribery. I mean, really, to make a valid case against De Borja, I thought that Subic should have taken the money and run, only to use it as proof later to send Borja to hell, if not to jail, plus all the people he is supposedly working for—or helping.

But whatever, as far as I know, there is nothing in our law about the so-called crime of attempting to bribe a public official.

Otherwise, our jails will be filled with offenders by now.

Anyway, in his affidavit, De Borja claimed that he did not have any interest in the Meralco case.

Rose Subic said that he did not think De Borja actually had P4 million to offer. So where is the money? Don't tell me—it must be still somewhere.

Anyway, Subic might be correct in saying he Borja did not have the money in his actual possession during the meeting.

Subic testified that De Borja had claimed that Malacañan chief Eduardo Lopez was waiting in a car on the night of their supposed meeting.

But Lopez already presented travel documents to prove he was not in the country on that night. Hmmm. Do you really think somebody is not telling the whole truth?

As for the money, I hope that supposedly-examined the P4-million bribe—in cash, mind you—De Borja actually established that it was a shopping bag with a piece of garment that he had just bought.

Whatever—what I seem to remember is that PCIJ chair Camilo L. Sabio, the brother of the justice, already admitted that he was also acting as an emissary for the opponent of Meralco in the case, which was the UMS.

Okay, so Sabio also claimed that Dr Borja presented him with calls and text messages, well, how come the grand master did not produce the evidence?

Me, I would save those text messages fifty thousand times!

# HK investment firm buys 13% of Alliance Tuna

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

HONG KONG INVESTMENT FIRM Victory Fund Ltd. has acquired 13 percent of manufacturing company Alliance Tuna International Inc. (AFH) for P1.26 million.

Data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) showed that shares of AFH were sold through a block sale on Jan. 6, consisting of 1.09 million shares at P1.60 a share.

Of this, 1.3 percent or 80 million shares were sold to Victory Fund by a number of local investors.

Ownership of the remaining 20 million shares could not be traced as of press time.

"They believe in our strategy of continuing globalization," AFH president Jonathan Dee said. "Our global sales and new products and acquisition to leverage on our already established market coverage."

He added that the new investor found AFH's five-year compounded annual growth of 2h percent to be "very steady," and expects it to move up to 20 percent this year.

AFH closed at P1.60 yesterday, up two centavos from its P1.58 traded price the other day.

AFH also said in a separate disclosure yesterday that it has sealed its acquisition of New Zealand's second largest seafood salmon processor.

AFH said it completed its due diligence examination—or the scrutiny of the target company's financial

## Shares sold at P1.60/share

health—on Prime Foods New Zealand (PFNZ) for a possible NZ$1.3-million investment.

AFH said after its due diligence review, it found no adverse findings on PFNZ.

It has signed an investment agreement with PFNZ on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Alliance Tuna is Thai-Filipino joint venture company and is a "private label manufacturer" of canned tuna, as it processes and cans tuna under the others' brands.

Its primary product is canned tuna in hermetically sealed pack can sizes.

To enhance margins, the company processes the by-products and scraps from its tuna processing operations into fish meal, which it sells to Philippine feed millers.

Out of its nine-month revenues in 2008, export sales of the mentioned pack accounted 46 percent or $17.84 million while the retail pack accounted for 46 percent or $16.097 million.

Local sale of fish meal contributed 8 percent or $2.21 million.

Last year, the company disclosed that it is pursuing a majority stake in PFNZ for roughly P1.3 million.

The acquisition is seen to boost Alliance Tuna's bid to expand into Oceania, the region consisting of islands in the Pacific, made up of Australia, the Malay archipelago, Melanesia, Micronesia, New Zealand and Polynesia.

PFNZ is Alliance Tuna's second acquisition in less than six months after investing in the assets of a tuna cannery in Indonesia.

PFNZ, established by Barry Smallbone, has been manufacturing and selling smoked mollusk since 1980. Currently, hot-smoked, cold-smoked and marinated salmon. Since then, it had grown to become one of the largest retail suppliers of smoked seafood in New Zealand with a market share of 21 percent through its flagship brand, Prime Smoke. PFNZ is also the leading supplier of processed salmon to Countdown Supermarkets, the biggest supermarket chain in New Zealand.

AFH will acquire "50 percent plus 1" of PFNZ. The transactions will be made in two tranches. The first tranche of roughly NZ$630,000 will be invested immediately while the balance, or the transfer to nearly NZ$630,000 is to be made within the year. AFH will also convert a loan of NZ$150,000 to PFNZ which will earn interest at market rates after the first year.

Under the investment agreement, AFH and PFNZ plan to form a joint venture company. 51 percent will be owned AFH. The joint venture will engage in the processing and exporting of salmon, which will be exported all over the world, except New Zealand which will continue to be served by PFNZ.

From page B1

# BSP reports record GIR of $37.1B

than the $154 billion posted in end-2007.

The GIR is a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of its economy. It consists of the central bank's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund.

About 88 percent of the country's GIR is denominated in US dollars, 8 percent in euros, 2.3 percent in Japanese yen, and the rest in other currencies.

The retained GIR can cover 5.6 months' worth of imports of goods and payments of service and income. It is also equivalent to 4.5 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity, and 2.8 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to the sum of short-term external debt and medium- and long-term loan repayments falling due within the next 12 months.

The GIR record have been higher had the peso remained in two-year rally. Last year, the central bank became a heavy seller of US dollar to temper the local currency's sharp depreciation.

In 2008, the peso depreciated by 13 percent against the US dollar.

But the BSP was able to avoid draining its official reserves by tapping its "usual/halal" foreign exchange stock.

Foreign exchange locked up in foreign currency swaps and not yet booked as part of the GIR declined to $1.39 billion at end-November from a high of $13 billion in January last year.

# Treasury sees decline in interest rates

From page B1

percent in November.

Price movements in December brought average inflation for 2008 at 9.3 percent.

Prior to November, inflation had hit double-digit figures due to oil prices that had soared to record levels in the middle of last year. The deceleration of inflation to a single digit in November came as a surprise to market players, who anticipated inflation to settle at below 10 percent by the first quarter of 2009.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the outlook on inflation for 2009 has become better now that inflation has eased to single-digit levels in recent months.

The BSP also said it was in a position to adopt a looser monetary policy, such as by further cutting its borrowing and lending rates.

This said the Bureau of the Treasury would continue this year with the usual debt liability management strategies of the government.

One such strategy is the conduct of debt swaps, which will allow the government to spread less on debt servicing.

Under a debt swap, the government borrows from the capital market when interest rates are low. Proceeds from the borrowing would be used to pay obligations that were obtained with higher interest rates.

# BUSINESS

## NFA posts record 'palay' score

### Agency's '08 procurement level highest since 1979

By Amy R. Remo

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) bought from local farmers 456,000 metric tons or 11 million bags of palay last year, the highest recorded in 28 years.

This represents a big jump from the 213,000 MT of palay bought by the NFA from local farmers in 2007. The 2008 palay procurement level was, however, way below the 1 million MT target set by the government early last year. It was also well lower than the 750,000 MT record posted in 1979.

At the average price of P800 per cavan of palay plus a hefty incentive of P1,000 for every 50 bags sold to the agency, the NFA paid local farmers nationwide some P13 billion last year.

In the second half of 2008, the government ordered the NFA to step up its local palay procurement operations to minimize rice importation this year.

The NFA also expected it was able to cut the rapid depletion of 2 million 50-kilogram bags of rice last year, which was about 87 percent of the government's target of 40 million bags.

NFA Administrator Jessup B. Navarro said the timely infusion of NFA rice in the market, particularly in the first half of 2008 gave consumers greater access to the staple and helped stabilize the price of rice, which had peaked to as high as P59 a kilo.

According to Navarro, these figures showed that the NFA had performed well last year in terms of domestic palay procurement and rice distribution, which benefited its major stakeholders particularly palay farmers and low-income consumers.

The quantity of NFA rice distributed last year manifested the government's growing preference for quality but more affordable government rice," Navarro said.

The volume of sales of NFA rice remained high even when commercial rice prices have slowly stabilized and new harvests started coming in the latter part of the year."

The food agency had been allocated P17 billion for its palay procurement operations last year.

The NFA said it has only 1 percent of the country's total palay production yearly, relying more on rice imports, which hit a high of 2.3 million MT last year.

Rice importation last year rose the government about $1.5 billion due mainly to the surge in the price of the staple in the middle of the year. In 2007, the country imported 1.79 million MT or only only $494 million.

With its aggressive procurement program, NFA public affairs director Rex Estoperez said the NFA was expected to end 2008 at rice stockpile of 550,000 MT, equivalent to 28 days worth of national daily consumption. Estoperez projected consumption at 21,100 MT of the staple daily.

The country's national rice stockpile, which included stocks in households and commercial dependents, was estimated to have reached an equivalent of 90-120 days of inventory as of end-2008.

## Roman holiday

LATE IN NOVEMBER, MY SON Gerry, who practices internal medicine in LA, treated me to a round-trip plane ticket to Rome. Be Blessed City.

He checked in early Saturday morning at a modest hotel two blocks from Vatican City, the smallest state in the whole world with an area of 44 hectares, only slightly larger than Makati's Ayala Center.

After breakfast, Gerry and I walked into the Vatican City. I enjoyed the notable cohesion and the romance over there.

We took the Hohne Chapel tour. We followed our guide along numerous halls lined with wonderful sculptures and paintings gathered through the centuries. Two hours later, we found ourselves in the Sistine Chapel itself. The chapel was jammed with tourists marveling at Leonardo da Vinci's paintings on the ceiling. A team of experts had taken 16 years to restore the paintings to their original magnificence.

The guide led us go at the front door of St. Peter's Basilica. Gerry and I walked in. Nothing prepared us for what we saw in all of Christendom, nothing is as magnificent as St. Peter's Basilica. It is awesome on earth.

At any rate, you are greeted by Michelangelo's Pieta in an alcove on the right side. Then you go around and marvel at the marble statues, at the angels, the Bernini tribunes. Everything was magnificent. I told Gerry the subject matter might have been religious but they could not have done what they did without help from above.

In the afternoon, we went sightseeing, the Fontdom of Trevi, the Spanish steps, the Forum, the Colosseum. Everywhere we went, there was something to gawk at on both sides of the road.

The following day, Sunday, was the highlight of our holiday. Gerry and I went to the 11 a.m. Mass at the main altar of St. Peter's. We were lucky to find seats near the altar.

Just before the Mass, an old Cardinal (he must have been at least a hundred years old) came shuffling with a cane from the side to take his seat by the altar. At his age, he was accepted. Some taking part in the opening procession of younger cardinals.

Appropriately, the Mass, the homily and the hymns were all in Latin. No Filipino prayers and hymns in St. Peter's.

After the Mass, Gerry and I ventured out into the Square, already jam-packed with a million devotees, for the noontime Papal Blessing. The Pope gave his blessing from his apostolic window. Even when I was, I could hardly make out the Pope's face. But, I felt I was touched just the same as if I was in front of him.

We lunch, we found a hole-in-the-wall restaurant just outside the City. We ate our pizza standing in the sidewalk, taking one of the tiny tables out entry. I felt a fallow tourist, as Manila you eat your pizza at a comfortable table, served by a good-looking waitress.

Then, we found a ship where we bought some canary birds. The sidelight assured us the beach were already blessed. Then, Gerry and I went for more sightseeing.

All in all, it was a memorable Roman holiday which I will cherish the rest of my miserable life.

## Allied Bank to offer ₱5B worth of LTNCDs

By Doris C. Dumlao

ALLIED BANKING CORP., a unit of the Lucio Tan group of companies, plans to boost funding by offering as much as P5 billion worth of high-yielding long-term negotiable certificates of deposits (LTNCDs).

In a separate disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the bank said it had inked a joint mortgage agreement with affiliate Bria Properties Philippines Inc. for the development of foreclosed assets, one in Manila and the other in Makati.

On the offering of LTNCDs, individual investors get the interest coupon for three if they hold the instrument to maturity, unlike the central bank's special deposit account and government securities which are dropped a 25-percent withholding tax. Banks are able to offer yields higher than regular deposits on LTNCDs because the funds raised from these are not covered by the reserve requirement.

Since LTNCDs are negotiable, they can be used as collateral or sold to another investor without affecting a change in ownership. LTNCDs are also covered by Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

Allied Bank's proposed offering of LTNCDs may be made to one or several tranches, bank corporate secretary Ma. Cecilia Pemberton said.

In the meantime, the joint venture with Bria covers an acquired property in Santa, Manila and another in Laguna Village, Makati.

Since 2006, banking regulators have been allowing local banks to raise into property development deals to reduce their stock of nonperforming assets. But they warn lenders only real and other properties acquired through foreclosures, payment in kind or as a result of a merger with another bank.

Under the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas guidelines, banks are prohibited from providing funds to any property joint venture involving a foreclosed property either as a loan or capital contribution.

What Properties specializes in the development of particular and mid-income residential and commercial buildings, construction of IT and business process outsourcing-ready offices buildings, creation of mixed-use township projects that incorporate residential, office, commercial, leisure and institutional components and redevelopment and management of hotels and shopping centers.

The property company likewise has development projects in Hong Kong and mainland China, particularly in Beijing, Shenzen, Dalian and Xiamen. It has executive landbanking in prime locations, particularly in Makati and Ortigas central business districts, Manila, Pasay, and Muntinlupa Bay Area, Mactan, Cebu, Cebu, Cebu, Iloilo, Calamba and other strategic domestic locations.

## Philex reports ₱800M in copper, gold output

PHILEX MINING CORP., THE Philippines' biggest mining company, recorded and 9 produced on December 2008 as its mines produced 800,430 dry metric tons of copper and gold ore were delivered by the mine and treated at the firm's Benguet Bonifacio facilities.

This volume yielded 6,707 DMT of copper concentrates with an average grade of 24.40 percent copper, 64.84 grams per DMT of gold and 8.109 grams per DMT of silver.

Its mine said these were equivalent metal contents of 1.64 million kilograms (1.61 million lbs) copper, 429,890 grams (13,819 ounces) gold, and 469,747 grams (15,174 ounces) silver.

Based on previous disclosures, the company's production of minerals in 2008 may have reached a total of 97,921 DMT of copper concentrates.

It recorded its biggest monthly production in March, with output reaching 7,467 DMT of copper concentrates, while the lowest output was recorded in September, with only 4,489 DMT of copper concentrates.

Philex said the low output in September was due to an operational problem in the cable belt hauling system, which affected ore deliveries to the Philex mill. Based on the operational plans of metal during the period, the daily output could reach 10,000 or value of P1.2 billion (for 6,581 DMT of copper concentrates), while the lowest value was in September at only P716 million. Amy R. Remo

## New City seen to boost Honda sales this year

By Rosemil W. Domingo

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES outbound a 17-percent shortfall in order last year but it expects a recovery in 2009 as it launched yesterday the third generation City model with more fuel efficiency.

HCPI sold 14,308 units across all vehicle categories in 2008 compared to 17,300 units in 2007.

Hiroshi Shimizu, HCPI president and general manager, said in an interview the decline was in part due to limited inventory as well as very few changes in models that were introduced last year.

Shimizu said the new Honda City unit the new Honda they first was launched late last year were expected to boost sales growth in 2009 and 2010.

The new City model "will play a significant role not just in the local market but in the international market, as well," he said.

THE NEW Honda City

"As a testimony of Honda's confidence in its local manufacturing operations, the (new City) will continue to be manufactured exclusively in Tanauan, Batangas," he added.

Shimizu said HCPI was ramping up its annual production of the City by 40 percent to 7,000 units this year.

to with the Honda Civic sedan. HCPI locally assembles the City from completely knocked down units.

Lani Dorcaitles, the company added off the production line for the new City which covers engine and body assembly, welding, painting and final quality inspection.

The first generation Honda City was introduced in 1998.

Since it was introduced in the Philippine market that same year, HCPI has observed sustained growth in sales, which has so far reached 81,000 as an average of some 3,300 units yearly.

The City is now being manufactured in Thailand, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, China and Turkey.

Also, the third generation City is rumored to have features that sustain fuel economy. It is also rumored to have a longer wheelbase and more spacious interior.

Also, the City is said to be the only car in its class to be equipped with a paddle shift, which allows shifting gears using buttons on the steering wheel instead of the clutch.

The new City comes in four variants—three with 1.3 liter engines capped at retail prices of P676,000, P716,000 and P756,000 a unit, and a 1.5 liter option at P800,800.

## *DOE seeks suppliers of 5M CFLs*

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY has started its search for suppliers of five million compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) to be distributed this year in franchise areas of private distribution utilities.

This forms part of the government's energy efficiency drive.

According to the DOE, this will be the first batch of the 15 million CFLs that will be distributed to residential electricity consumers all over the country.

The DE distribution program is under the Philippine Energy Efficiency Project (PEEP), which is supported by the Asian Development Bank.

Of the total, 1.35 million CFLs will be distributed to customers within Manila Electric Co.'s north sector: 230,000 in Novaliches, Quezon City; 180,000 in Commonwealth, Quezon City and Valenzuela; 250,000 in San Mateo in Rizal; 140,000 in the Malolos-Calumpit area; 120,000 in Bulacan, Bataan and Meycauayan in Bulacan; and 150,000 in Balintawak, Quezon City.

For Meralco's central sector, 1,185,000 will be distributed to residential customers in Cainta in Rizal, Mandaluyong and Pasig; 140,000 in Makati and Pateros-Taguig; 120,000 in Muntinlupa and Bacoor; 120,000 in Angeles in Pampanga; 120,000 in Malolos-Bulacan area; 120,000 in Bulacan; and 150,000 in Balintawak, Quezon City.

For Meralco's southern sector, 140,000 will be distributed to residential customers in Cainta in Rizal, Mandaluyong and Pasig; 140,000 in Makati and Pateros-Taguig; 120,000 in Muntinlupa and Bacoor; 120,000 in Angeles in Rizal; 150,000 in Malolos-Bulacan area; 120,000 in Bulacan; and 150,000 in Balintawak, Quezon City.

For Meralco's central sector, 140,000 will be distributed to residential customers in Cainta in Rizal, Mandaluyong and Pasig; 140,000 in Makati and Pateros-Taguig; 120,000 in Muntinlupa and Bacoor; 120,000 in Angeles in Rizal; 150,000 in Malolos-Bulacan area; 120,000 in Bulacan; and 150,000 in Balintawak, Quezon City.

Private distribution utilities in Visayas and Mindanao will also get their share of CFLs for distribution to their customers. Visayan Electric Co. Inc. will get 250,000 units, Davao Light and Power Co. Inc., 200,000 units, and Cagayan Electric Power and Light Co. Inc., 90,000 units.

Bids from interested suppliers will be opened on July 15, in accordance with the ADB's single-stage, two-envelope bidding procedure.

Other components of the PEEP are the retrofitting of government offices and public lighting installations to enable the use of energy-efficient lamps, expansion of the energy efficiency labeling system, establishment of a lamp waste facility, setting up of green building initiatives and communication, and increasing social awareness.

## PLDT acquires Philcom

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. is taking over debt-saddled Philippine Global Communications Inc.'s (Philcom Inc.) stake in Bibiano operator Philcom Corp. to broaden its presence in southern Philippines.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PLDT said it signed on Jan. 2 an agreement with Philcom Inc. to acquire some 60.6 million shares or 60 percent of listed holding firm APC Group Inc.'s, wherein the latter sold its entire stake in Philcom Corp. for P75 million.

PLDT had been managing Philcom Corp.'s fixed line facilities in Mindanao since January 2006 but its limited control did not allow PLDT to implement an aggressive expansion of those facilities. PLDT operates in Mindanao through PLDT Global Inc. and Smart Broadband Inc.

PLDT is also taking over Philcom Corp.'s obligations to suppliers, and to banks and other financial institutions.

It said it signed on Jan. 2 a debt assignment deal with PremierGlobal Resources Corp., wherein PGR sold Philcom-related liabilities to PLDT for P340 million. Rino C. Olchondra

## Benguet claims confirmed

THE MINES AND GEOSCIENCES BUREAU (MGB) has confirmed the validity of various mining and exploration investments and projects of listed firm Benguet Corp.

Benguet made the disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange in compliance with the revised disclosure rules of the bourse.

Three mining projects include the Kingking copper-gold project in Davao, Compostela Valley; Sto. Tomas II copper prospect, Pantingan copper-gold project in Baguio, Benguet. Benguet gold operations, its consolidated gold operations and Antamok copper-gold project, Itogon Mines prospect, Benguet gold prospect in Camarines Norte and Camsur mine gold prospect in Zamboanga del Sur.

According to the MGB, the Kingking copper-gold project is held by Benguet under a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) covering 1,036 hectares. Benguet has yet to find a joint venture partner for its Kingking project, which is Benguet's largest mining prospect and would count as among the country's five priority mining projects. Amy R. Remo

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

LIFESTYLE Food

# My favorite burger recipes

THIS I HAVEN'T DONE IN QUITE A while—replying to recipe requests for one's column business. So what better time than now? Happy New Year, Jinx Jinx!

I am based in Cebu and thinking of setting up a high-end burger business. Could you please help me make my hamburger patty and give recipe ideas for my dream burger house business? Many thanks and more power.

Ivan Jao

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aguilar

Some burger tips: Remember, the more the quality and not cut of beef you use, the nicer the burger. Other secrets to making sublime patties are ground onions and the addition of beef fat that prevents patties from drying out.

BURGER with Shiitake Mushrooms and Garlic Cream Cheese

### Beef Burger Patties

1 kilo ground beef (1 use chuck meat)
½ kilo ground beef fat
2 tsp barbecue seasoning
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp onion powder
2 tsp garlic powder
3 tbsp grated red onion
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients and mix well, using your clean hands.

Continue mixing until the mixture becomes sticky, coming together to form a ball.

Weigh. My patties weigh anywhere between 200-300 grams.

Form into patties. I like mine thick. I use a round mold for consistency in size.

Chill and when hard enough to handle, wrap individually with cling wrap and freeze.

Thaw as needed.

Grill.

Here are some of my favorite burger variations:

### Burger with Shiitake Mushrooms and Garlic Cream Cheese

Burger buns
Burger patties
Whipped cream cheese
Arugula
Tomatoes
Onions
Balsamic dressing

1 c fresh shiitake or fresh button mushrooms, steamed in olive oil seasoned with salt and pepper

Warm burger buns. Spread whipped cream cheese on buns. Grill patties. Sandwich burger between buns. Top with arugula, onions, tomato. Top with mushrooms. Drizzle with balsamic dressing.

### Garlic Cream Cheese

½ c good quality cream cheese
2 tbsp garlic, pounded to a paste
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp salt
½ tsp sugar
½ tsp pepper
3 tbsp green onion
Salt
Pepper

Mix a onion, whip cream cheese. Add the rest of the ingredients. Mix to blend.

### Balsamic Dressing

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tsp honey
6 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl, combine vinegar and honey. Gently pour in olive oil while whisking. Season with salt and pepper.

### Japanese Teriyaki Burgers

Burger buns
Burger patties
Teriyaki sauce
Japanese mayonnaise
Japanese mustard
Arugula
Watercress
Shiitake mushrooms, sauteed

Warm burger buns. Spread mayonnaise and mustard. Grill patties. Top each teriyaki sauce with onions, arugula and watercress. Finish off with shiitake mushrooms.

½ cup water
2 tsp ginger, grated
2 tsp cornstarch
4 onions, sliced thin

Combine all ingredients except onions. Simmer until slightly thickened. Add onions. Cook until onions become slightly soft.

My new class schedules are out. For inquiries, call 928-9296/0908-2372346.

E-mail the author at reggie@inquirer.com.ph.

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### Teriyaki Sauce

2 tbsp butter
1 tbsp hon dashi
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup soy sauce

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# Return
## of an Italian classic

SALMON was beer-topped with tomatoes, garlic, basil, capers and onion in olive oil

By Virgie Baja-Reyes

THE NEWLY RENOVATED Carpaccio Ristorante Italiano welcomes the dining scene to showcase a bigger, brighter and better-looking Italian resto there is to the city.

From what it was when it started in 1996—small, dark, intimate and a bit mysterious...to a more polished, lively and up-to-date design, Carpaccio aims to deliver genuine Italian experience to every table.

"We've upgraded Carpaccio to what a real Italian dining is now in Italy," says Andreas Ritcher, assistant general manager. "If you go to Milan or Rome, you won't see any dark and creepy restaurants anymore. Times have changed. So, if you have lunch or dinner in Carpaccio it's like you're having lunch and dinner in Italy."

Cool interiors with bright lights—and more sunlight coming in during lunchtime through the large glass walls—and dining areas with plush and luxurious leather seat upholstered in beige are off by dark wooden tables and fine art demarcate from truly mark the new Carpaccio dining.

The lights are dimmed toward the evening to give way to a more intimate candlelit dinner, complemented by Andrea Bocelli's dishes.

"You can't recognize the restaurant at night because it's very romantic. The mood changes altogether," states Ritcher.

At lunch, the tables are set with table runners in different hues for a very bistro-like look; dinnertime, white tablecloths replace the runners matched with mini floral glass vases. The entire room, including the function room, rewards, smoking and nonsmoking areas, can seat about 120 people.

The open kitchen stimulates guests' appetites and ensures clean and freshly served food.

SEAFOOD pasta with asparagus and fresh herbs

BEEF carpaccio with extra-virgin olive oil and parmesan shavings, served with forest mushrooms and parsley salad

The new look, with the help of interior designer Yuan Otico-Valdez, also gives emphasis to the central bar where some of Western Bergen's finest wine selections are displayed.

Carpaccio prides itself with a sophisticated wine list—to match all its food offerings. Wine selection includes an excellent range of Italian wines from the seven famous regions of Piemonte, Veneto, Sicilia, Marche, Abruzzo and Campania. Also part of the wine lists are bestsellers from other major wine-producing countries such as France, Spain, Australia, Chile, South Africa and New Zealand. Definitely the best value wines one can find among the many fine dining restaurants in town.

AT NIGHT, Carpaccio becomes an intimate, romantic place.

### Italian delights

With the new look comes Carpaccio's new set of menus. Herder, however, unenvelopes patrons that classic favorites have been kept in the new menu.

Carpaccio's all-time favorite appetizers are still in: Carpaccio alla Cipriani (traditional beef carpaccio served with extra-virgin olive oil, freshly ground black pepper and fresh parmesan shavings); Carpaccio Piemontese (beef carpaccio with extra-virgin olive oil and parmesan shavings served with forest mushroom and parsley salad); and Carpaccio di Salmone e Branzino alla Mediterranea (salmon and seabass topped with tomatoes, garlic, basil, capers and onion in olive oil).

In terms of pizza and main dishes, Carpaccio retains their classic Pizza Diavola (tomato, spicy salami, onions, garlic, chili, Italian olives and oregano) and crispy Pizza Emilia (pizza-style sandwich filled with Pizza, shredded iceberg lettuce, tomatoes and mayonnaise).

Treating the palate for the true connoisseur include the Risotto Nilo Ligurio (seafood risotto with prawns, mussels, squid, scallops, salmon fillet flavored with tomatoes) and Risotto ai Porcini e Dadolata di Pollo (saffron risotto with Knight porcini, grilled diced chicken breast and tomatoes sprinkled with parmesan cheese).

The homemade pastas also promise to bring a filling sensation, including the Ravioli con Ricotta e Spinaci (Pasta square filled with spinach and ricotta and served with sage butter and grated parmesan cheese) and Ravioli alla Panna (meat filled pasta served with a parmesan cream sauce).

The new and old desserts will always be a tempting come-on for the sentesimi: Tiramisu (world-famous creation of mascarpone, lavishedi coffee, amaretto and coffee liqueur); Cioccolato Banana Mousse (light chocolate mousse fondue with banana); and Zabaione (a smooth and fluffy Italian delight made of egg yolk, sugar and marsala flavored with cinnamon, served on homemade vanilla gelato and Savoiardi).

Carpaccio Ristorante Italiano (tels. 843-7206 and or 8671164) is at 2/F, Mezzo Bergen Bldg., 7331 Yakal St., San Antonio Village, Makati (right beside Small's Delicatessen). Open: Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., and 6 p.m.–11 p.m.

# Sweet and tangy pasta salad

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

HERE'S A dish you can add to your holiday table: pasta salad sweetened with raisins yet also tangy with pineapple and calibre. Thousand Island Dressing is a good substitute for mayonnaise. It incorporates all the flavors of mayonnaise and pours easily from the bottle.

**Sweet and Tangy Pasta Salad**

500 g fusilli pasta
1 coarsely-diced ham (optional)
1 cup pineapple tidbits, well drained
1 celeriac
2 cups thousand island dressing
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp sugar, optional

Cook pasta according to package directions. Let cool then transfer to a mixing bowl. Add ham (if using), pineapple tidbits and celeriac. Pour in thousand island dressing and season with salt, pepper and sugar, if desired.

Toss gently until all ingredients are coated with the dressing.

**Tips**

- Fusilli pasta is spiral-shaped pasta, available in supermarkets. To make the salad more colorful, choose multicolored fusilli.
- If fusilli is not available, substitute with any short pasta such as penne or elbow macaroni.
- Some brands of Thousand Island dressing may be a bit too sour for Filipino taste. Taste the dressing before you use it on the salad. If it's too sour, add sugar before tossing with the salad.

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## ormioli occo on our table

The SM Mall of Asia welcomes the New Year with a Grand Mascot Parade held last January 01. Mascots greeted kids and paraded through the arcades.

# Catalog of 'kakanin' and 'biskwit'

"INVENTORY GONE ON."

That sign presented my family from getting a proper New Year lunch in Baguio years ago. That's what delayed necessary pain killers from being administered, at least that's what the nurses told us at the hospital. Can dinner be an necessary while operations go on?

Those two examples are not exactly what L. Terrence Ann de Guzman Calimoso de la Nonno is about. It's about taking inventory of French traditional products.

The project written by Randall Rothenberg was originally published in the magazine "Cuando Nuevo Traveler" in 1996, reprinted in the book "Provence: The Culinary Traveler" edited by Barrie Kreps. Rothenberg described L. Terminator as an encyclopedic endeavor to "catalog every extant traditional food product in each of the nation's twenty-six interval and provincial regions."

The surprising aspect of this very French project is that two people who undertook the job were not even French. The Americans husband-and-wife team, Philip and Mary Hyman, were commissioned to go through the country to track down the products helped by French winemakers, oilmakers and an agronomist. The Hymans who were living in France produced several translations of works by French acclaimed chefs like Paul Bocuse and articles on unique recipes. For the Conseil National des Arts Culinaires (CNAC), the government agency which oversaw the project, the couple's authoritative knowledge of French cuisine was more important.

**COUNTRY COOKING**

*Mickey Pereira*

The result of the project is several volumes of food that are still "living" or still being produced in the "regional regions" such as Alsace, Limousin and the "outermost regions" such as Guadeloupe.

The Hymans found that with traditional products, sometimes changes have taken place through the years, even centuries. A sugar-coated confection like choupette de Verdun, given during baptisms, used to be made of animal fats is now made of almonds. Foie gras from Perigord used to be made only from geese fed on maize also includes duck liver. There were instances when they knew can no longer be found such as confit de bichons, rosemary honey from Narbonne in southern France. The sad part is what they found in sheep cures from somewhere else such as Spain.

I suppose the objective is not only to document products but also to encourage production as a way to preserve their culinary culture.

**246 cheese varieties**

Author Rothenberg lightsomed observation is that L. Terminator may also reveal if the comments of Charles de Gaulle on just how many cheeses are produced in France is accurate. The former French president is reported to have said, "How can you govern a country which has two hundred and forty-six varieties of cheese?"

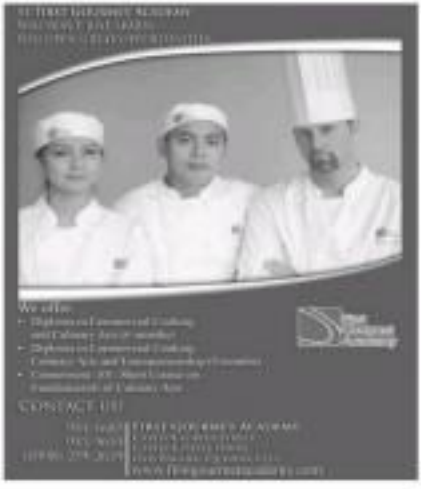
It would be interesting to know if the same project can be done to our country. Just imagine how many kinds of kakanin (rice cakes) there are in our town, in our province.

When I started and wrote about the salt block salted salad in Tuguegarao, many e-mails were sent telling me about the salt blocks in other regions of the country.

Yet as interesting as "living" food should be fresh-that have vanished or are about to. Doreen Gamboa Fernandez's mother, Alicia Lucero Gamboa, once told me about a Bisaya delicacy, Sisi-Maria, which she said has disappeared. My grandmother cooked a chicken dish with peanut sauce (not kare-kare or pipian) that I haven't tasted for ages. My mother-in-law told me about bupia served during Leyte flotsam that had no counterpart at all to the Chinese lupia as we know it.

Why not do your own inventory and write me about it?

E-mail pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

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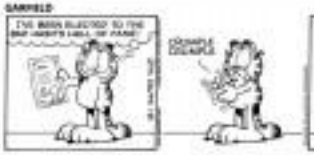
GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS



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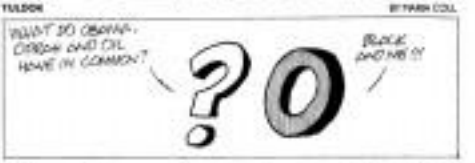
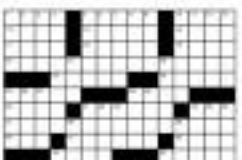


KIKO MACHINE — BY FRANCI AMEDA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

## DAILY CROSSWORD



## HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCOIS DRAKE

## CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

### Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | | | | | | | 9 |
| | | 3 | 8 | | 4 | 1 | | |
| | | 8 | | | | 2 | | |
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| | | 2 | | | | 9 | | |
| | | 7 | 3 | | 9 | 8 | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | 4 |

Difficulty Level: ★★★

Distributed by Conceptis Puzzles, Box 52708, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2T5, Canada

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
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Answer to previous puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| 9 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 1 |
| 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| 6 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| 2 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 5 |

# ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emerson G. Villando

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## MMFF best actors did not expect to win

**Her first big heartbreak**

Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rocki Nolasco

ANNE CURTIS WAS SURE the Best Actress Award in the recent 34th Metro Manila Film Festival would go to Dawn Zulueta, Dr. Marivel Lizza, Dr. Ai-Ai de las Alas, Anyone but herself.

Until Anne's name was called on awards night for her work in Mark Meily's period movie "Baler," which also won Best Picture.

The 19-Awards winners said she did not have a thank-you speech prepared. Actually, neither did the other winning performers.

Best Actor Christopher de Leon, star of Jose Javier Reyes' "Magnakakapu," described the film as "really very simple. So I didn't think there's a need to give the award to me."

De Leon's toughest competition were Jericho Rosales for "Baler" and Jose Jaggery Estrada, who co-starred in "Magkakapitbahay."

Phillip Salvador, who bagged the Best Supporting Actor Trophy, also for "Baler," said he was happy enough to have been given a "second look" by Miss Nora head Ms. Chit Reyes.

PHOTO 1: Christopher de Leon wanted Jaggery Estrada to win; Anne Curtis didn't prepare a speech; Phillip Salvador was just happy to get the win

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## MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

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NOW SHOWING

# Hairloss is wrecking her life and she doesn't know why.

Thinning hair makes a woman look older. When your hair's health, shine and bounce weaken, it seems your personality is likewise affected. Self-consciousness, diminished self-esteem, even bouts of depression may occur.

Most women who have gone through this harrowing experience say they tried everything to stop hairloss, from special treatments at the salon, to a whole range of over-the-counter products. But nothing worked. Sadly, many "remedies" may have actually made the condition worse. Until they found out the reason why they were losing hair, little could be done to end the problem.

**Possible reasons for hairloss.**

Women's hairloss can be caused by hormonal changes. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic Alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body (androgens) which can weaken a woman's hair. Other factors can be stress, poor nutrition, illnesses and reaction to certain medications, childbirth and menopause. Frequent coloring, curling, straightening, and many more. Most causes of hairloss, when they are correctly identified, can be treated with good results.

**Getting the facts on why you are losing hair.**

Trichology is the study of the functions and problems of hair. A trichologist or someone who has been educated in the subject and is qualified to determine the reasons why your hair is not in good health.

Where do you find a trichologist? One name that has been synonymous with Professional Trichology in the Philippines for more than 25 years: Svensson. Svensson trichologists will examine your hair and scalp and give you advice on what to do.

**A trichologist – what does it cost?**

Nothing. Svensson trichologists offer an in-depth Hair & Scalp analysis totally free of charge.

**Pre-hairloss symptoms.**

Before your hair starts falling out, be aware of early warning signs such as persistent dandruff, flaking, and scalp irritations. Beat hairloss – see a trichologist when you see these signs!

These visible indications are embarrassing, and when combined with dirt or fine atmospheric dustpost chemicals or excessive oil/sweat, they can block follicles, badly affecting hair growth.

**Treatments to help your hair.**

Depending on the findings of your Hair & Scalp analysis, you can decide on treatment programs including:

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*SCALP-CORRECTIVE* – eliminates dandruff, flaking and other irritations, returns scalp to normal state, prevents recurrent hairloss.


Make an appointment today to see a trichologist!
Call Svensson at 840-4241/ 234-0861(Cebu).

# SM CINEMA movietime

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Four forward, 20 years later, the struggle to raise an excellent military professor at Marikit University and has also successfully mastered to the art of exploring into a record recovery ultra-kuh of Humalian agent a must be a mystery. He hopes to find out the Humpilan of Lapu-Lapu and his allies for disabling the fairy war tattoo, while his wife, Amelia, the Kampilan is in the hands of Bisayans. A spunky Japanese national whose mom married to the Pinays, which should be found in the Kamudan's timeline. This Prince is one white-line remaining 30 crowns of Junior when which gives membership to whoever possesses it. Unfortunately, it's missing when he meets the Kamudan then the mystic at his quest!

And why are Tito and Joey Tacsoro telling their Mommy? How will the whole gang be involved in the exciting but dangerous search for the 30 powerful jewels?

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3 BEDTIME STORIES
4 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
5 THE SPIRIT
6 [illegible]
7 DESPERADAS 2
8 ANG TANGING INA N'YONG LAHAT
9 ISKUL BUKOL
10 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X

## ERMITA

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 THE SPIRIT
4 TRANSPORTER 3
5 DESPERADAS 2
6 ISKUL BUKOL
7 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
8 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X
9 [illegible]

## METRO EAST

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 THE SPIRIT
4 TRANSPORTER 3
5 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
6 ISKUL BUKOL
7 DESPERADAS 2
8 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL X

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1 BEDTIME STORIES
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4 THE SPIRIT
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2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 THE SPIRIT
4 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT

## IMUS

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2 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
3 THE SPIRIT
4 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
5 ISKUL BUKOL

## ANGELES

1 BEDTIME STORIES
2 THE SPIRIT
3 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
4 ISKUL BUKOL

## STARMILLS

1 BEDTIME STORIES
2 THE SPIRIT
3 ISKUL BUKOL
4 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
5 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 9
6 DESPERADAS 2

## BACOLOD

1 BEDTIME STORIES
2 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT
3 ISKUL BUKOL
4 THE SPIRIT
5 TWILIGHT
6 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL

## ILOILO

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 BEDTIME STORIES
3 THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 9
5 ISKUL BUKOL
6 ANG TANGING INA MYONG LAHAT

# MMFF best actors did not expect to win

Front page 4A

Winning, he insisted, was "a bonus."

Marilyn Reyes, declared Best Supporting Actress for Bayer "Ilan Hagi Only," was not even around to accept her award. Reyes, who did so on her behalf, said Reyes was, in fact, a "last-minute replacement."

"The victory is not just for me, but for all the people who worked hard to make this film," Salvador told Inquirer Entertainment shortly after the awards rites at the Solaire Hotel in Pasay City. "I feel fortunate to [have been] part of a great period movie."

He was very impressed with Cesar Montano, Salvador added. He plays the role of Daniel Reyes, a Filipino rebel leader and father to Gerald character Rilles. "Mahirap pa ang nanonood sya," he said of the actress. "She's very fortunate to have had the chance to work with Mark Molly [who] can no-doubt no-nairo to-do [well] habit pagod to-angel na."

Molly was named Best Director.

On awards night, Cortés said she was very nervous. Later, she said winning "made my 2008 complete."

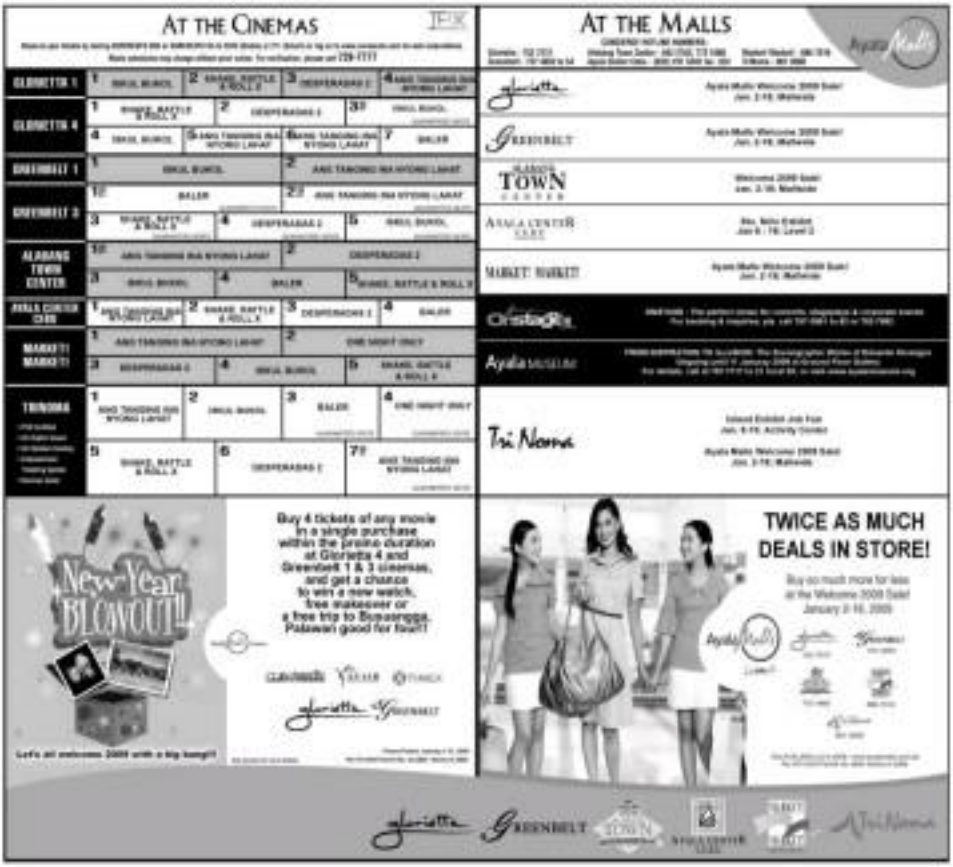
She had competed with Zubiri and Lore ("Magkakapatid") and De los Santos ("Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat").

On Lore, who had seen the awards from the SMAPE said he would not mind if the actors had picked another actor, preferably Estrada.

He told Inquirer, "I'm not sure Jericho is 'Jaker' but I know that Jinggoy, who did well in 'Sanaol' last year, did a better job in 'Magkakapatid.'"

Lore may Estrada bagged the top acting plum in the festival for his role as a distraught overseas Filipino worker in "Kaming Mga Sanaol," also written and directed by Reyes.

(fmorfe@inquirer.com.ph



# Food-tripping in Singapore

SINGAPORE—WE ARRIVED AT AROUND 1:30 a.m. on New Year's Eve in Singapore, one of my favorite cities for—food!

The hawker stands abound with all sorts of delicioussness for less, here prices (many, like near Arnak and Hainanese chicken rice for only a few Singapore dollars per serving), while the high-end restaurant menu mention in every single international restaurant guide ever published.

The 2008/2009 Miele Guide scores restaurants in Southeast Asia, and the venue it deemed No. 1 on its list is Iggy's in Singapore. It was in this wonderful place that my family spent New Year's Eve along with good friends, some of whom we just met in the restaurant.

Iggy's is named after Iggadas Chan, who owns the restaurant with his wife Pauline. There is as a la carte menu available, only tasting menus reached us that each dish follows and complements the other in perfect harmony. The first time I had the great fortune of seeing at Iggy's was a few months ago, and that was a real treat!

On this New Year's Eve, the set menu included Lush Wine salmon with caper/berries, Rice with orange jelly and egg yolks, Hokkaido scallops topped with sea urchin, and tiger/in (pasta, similar to spaghetti) topped with white truffle.

### Chefs as artists

The place de resistance was the Hippies wagyu beef, just varnish perfect served with watercress salad. Each bite exploded in my mouth, tender and flavorful. More than the beef itself, I think what made it special was the care with which it was prepared.

That's the thing about Iggy's that sets it apart from its peers. The chefs are artists, not just cooks. The restaurant seats only about 50, and are can be seen at connection to detail to the food preparation.

Or find out more about Iggy's, visit www.iggys.com.sg.)

On the other side of the spectrum, it's not all fine dining, where you find great eats for very low prices.

On the "Columbia" list, some members of the cast have been more than just a little ad-venturous in the pursuit for good food. I try to be careful in choosing my meals, but I've sampled my share of some fantastic delights, including Himalayan, all kinds of seafood, and that "How that we've stopped in Singapore, the food only continues ...

A few of my favorite dishes here are (again) Hainanese chicken rice, char kway teow (flat noodles with seafood and dark soy sauce) and (again) *asam laksa*. (rice cooked in coconut milk, served with either fried chicken, curry or vending, than tofu — something like tofu — and protected. Each of these can be made to order very cheaply (lowker stands in the city and stalls in the shopping malls serve these gems—and hey, are they ever delicious!

Between shows on Saturday, I joined a bunch of Pinoy friends for barbecue food outdoors only a stone's throw away from the Esplanade (Olympus with "Seinfeldia"). I walked the line of stalls, each one unique in its offerings. I had a dish of chef Tasty-how, some fried beef noodles, sweet and sour pork (and with satay), yet another rice fried rice.

### More running

After the Sunday sustenance, a few of us on the show headed across the street from the theater to the Marina Square Mall. On the way there is a food court, where all kinds of stuff can be found: Chinese dumplings, Indian food, noodles, and I love here! I had my real lunch fix here, and whilst walking to my table, spied a chicken rice stall. Seen more, I shall have that. One of our presenters also happened to be at the same food court, and he might her pre (steamed pauses dumplings) in our table.

I plan to have a few more lovely adventures during my stay here. Stay tuned.

## Lessons celebs learned from 2008

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR 365 DAYS were and where it led you? As we embark on a whole new journey this 2009, are we armed with enough lessons from 2008?

Did the celebs learn what they needed to learn? There a no better teacher than love and pain. Whether your heart is on a crash course or pursuing a master's degree, make sure it does in homework well.

Cheers to love wars and no fears! Look at life in the eye and say, "2009 is gonna be mine!"

**ARIEL PAREN (Journey):** "The biggest eye-opener is: 'Di ka rin ang finding out who my real friends are. And also, a strengthen on faith para di ko matakot sa kahit."

**SHEYLLE:** "I finally understood in '08 what 'in God's time' means. I've just learned to be more diligent in my prayers. I need to step at times and trust Him more."

**DENNIS TRILLO:** "I learned in '08 that I've got to have faith, be brave and face my own demons. There is nothing to fear but fear itself."

**PRECIOUS LARA QUIGAMAN:** "My experiences in 2008 taught me to fight for what I know is right even if it's the hardest thing to do and despite of what anyone else says."

**DEETHER OCAMPO:** "2008 taught me to free myself from the bondage of misery and hate that kept my dreams from coming true. I must enjoy the freedom of living my life according to how God planned it. I should share the seeds of love to help rebuild a future that would be at its greatest."

**ALFRED VARGAS:** "I found out in '08 that the only way to find true happiness is through love and faith. Love brings out the best in us and faith keeps us strong. This '09, all my endeavors, personal and professional, will be sparked by love and fueled by faith. It's not going to be easy but I know it's worth the try."

**ISABEL OGDEN:** "The biggest thing I learned in '08 is that no one will always come

*Dolly Anne Carvajal*

Sunshine: 'What angers you, conquers you'

but it's how you handle issues that matters. You can let it affect you or you can just let it go. This year I will choose my battles."

**CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA:** "'08 reminded me that this life is not about me."

**ADA MINA:** "I have learned to be more patient and forgiving. I refuse to carry myself because of negative energies. I will live them in a manner manner. So those life (I) we show long also ang time so ya at bind. I'll always say to others so I can, won't eat people who have a hidden agenda to take this for."

**RYAN SYLVESTER:** "Never let go of opportunities whether big or small."

**RACHEL ALEJANDRO:** "Last year I learned that even the most impossible of situations can be overcome. I need to act upon the things in my life I want to change because no one else will do it for me."

**MINA:** "Whatever happens, there's no turning back. Just moving forward."

**SUNSHINE CRUZ:** "I realized that there's a big difference between wanting and responding. It is smarter to respond than be in control of my emotions. It's true that what angers you, conquers you. I promise that I will conquer '09 with positivity, productivity, compassion and love."

DONAMAE: "'08 taught me how to be forgiving para magsimula ang year ng '09 and pagpapasok ng bagong taon nag-aalis ang lumang nasanay ang isa."

E-mail comments to bgbalungay@inquirer.com.ph

SHOW TIME

### 'Rock and Roll Fever' at MOA

THE CHOREN PEW with Ray Centeno, the Hermosamiers, and the Sandowsons are part of the more than 10 bands performing at 'Rock and Roll Fever: Get Infected.' The free concert celebrating the seventh anniversary of the online community pinoychannelrock.com (PCR) will be staged tomorrow at the 3M Mall of Asia Music Hall. Penny and on Jan. 10 at the Sheep Aquino Pedro and Wilcinio Amphitheater, QC. Both shows start at 3 p.m.

### Benefit gigs

A series of benefit gigs for singer Soriel Bosch, who collapsed from exhaustion, will be held tomorrow, on Jan. 14 and 15 at Tres 02 Bar, Sct. Visitation, QC. Call 0916-6634596.

### Jan. 10

Mark Tuason at Sweetberry, Clark, Pampanga